

THE CLOSURE OF THE POLITICAL AS A PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY:  
A CRITIQUE ON DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT IN TURKEY

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by  
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June 2009



To my family; Özlem, Leyla, Uğur, Erdinç

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The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
Bilkent University

by

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in

THE DEPARTMENT OF  
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
BİLKENT UNIVERSITY  
ANKARA

June 2009

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and Public Administration.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE CLOSURE OF THE POLITICAL AS A PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY: A CRITIQUE ON DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT IN TURKEY

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This thesis examines the analysis of Turkish politics in the works of three key social scientists in Turkey: Niyazi Berkes, Şerif Mardin and Metin Heper. Berkes's account on the development of secularism in Turkey, Mardin's center-periphery model and Heper's strong state tradition argument and his idea of rational democracy are the subjects of the critical evaluation in this study. The main question of this thesis is whether the perspective they develop in their analysis can provide a critical democratic vision, which locates the political at its center. My project is to evaluate these three accounts from a radical democratic theory based on the ideas of Bonnie Honig and Jacques Rancière. By drawing on the writings of Honig and Rancière, I aim to elucidate the meaning of democracy and the political in order to frame my theoretical and conceptual position. Additionally, from this theoretical perspective I define the meaning of the closure of the political and argue that it is the fundamental problem of democracy. My analysis focuses on the conceptions of politics and the binary oppositions in Berkes, Mardin and

Heper. My argument is that their accounts consist of limitations in registering different instances of the closure of the political as a problem of democracy. Furthermore, they displace politics with their conceptions of politics and dichotomous thinking.

Keywords: Democracy, Political, Secularization, Center-Periphery, State Tradition, Metin Heper, Niyazi Berkes, Şerif Mardin.



## ÖZET

### DEMOKRASİ SORUNU OLARAK POLİTİKANIN KAPANMASI: TÜRKİYE’DE DEMOKRASİ DÜŞÜNCESİNİN BİR ELEŞTİRİSİ

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Bu tez, Türkiye’de üç sosyal bilimcinin çalışmalarındaki Türkiye siyasetini analizini incelemeyi amaçlar: Niyazi Berkes, Şerif Mardin ve Metin Heper. Berkes’in Türkiye’de sekülerizmin gelişimi tezi, Mardin’de merkez-çevre modeli ve Heper’de güçlü devlet geleneği ve rasyonel demokrasi fikri bu çalışmanın eleştirel değerlendirme konularıdır. Bu tezin temel sorusu söz konusu sosyal bilimcilerin analizlerinde geliştirdikleri perspektiflerin, politik olanı merkeze yerleştiren, eleştirel demokratik bir bakış sağlayıp sağlayamadıklarıdır. Projenin amacı, bu üç analizin, Bonnie Honig ve Jacques Rancière’in fikir ve teorilerine dayanan radikal demokrasi perspektifinden bir değerlendirmesini yapmaktır. Tez kuramsal ve kavramsal pozisyonunu çerçeveselendirmek amacıyla Honig ve Rancière’in yazılarından yararlanarak, demokrasi ve siyasetin anlamını açıklar. Ayrıca söz konusu kuramsal perspektif, politikanın kapanmasının tanımını verir ve bunun demokrasinin temel bir sorunu olduğunu ileri sürer. Analiz Berkes, Mardin ve Heper’in politika kavramsallaştırmalarına ve analizlerine temel oluşturan dualitelere

odaklanır. Tezin argümanı Berkes, Mardin ve Heper'in analizlerinin farklı biçimlerdeki politika kapanmalarını demokrasi sorunu olarak belirleme açısından sınırlı olduklarıdır. Ayrıca politika kavramsallaştırmaları ve analizlerindeki dualiteleri ile politikayı indirgerler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Demokrasi, Siyaset, Sekülerleşme, Merkez-Çevre, Devlet Geleneği, Metin Heper, Niyazi Berkes, Şerif Mardin.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

For the notion of the rule of law, Judith Shklar (1987:1) points out that the politicians have frequently used it as a ‘self-congratulatory rhetorical device’. In the last three decades, the term democracy seems to have the same function. Everyone, no matter what their demands or their political positions are, underlines the importance of democracy. Everyone seems to commit to democracy as a political regime. The mere utterance of the word democracy is thought to provide the necessary justification. Yet, contrary to its frequent use, there is hardly a consensus on the meaning of it. In fact, plurality of the definition of democracy enables the use of the term of democracy as a self-congratulatory rhetorical device. This requires us to start with a discussion on the meaning of democracy before getting into an analysis of some empirical cases and different experiences of democracy in different societies.

A discussion on the definition of democracy is part and parcel of any analysis of democracy in a particular society. The way we define democracy

plays a fundamental role in our analysis of different societies to understand their experiences of democracy and the obstacles they have before a democratic life. In other words, our evaluations are framed by the definition we have. According to our understanding of democracy, we might be able to see certain actors, experiences and relations as fundamental and primary for a democratic life, and our horizon of democracy might be blind for some other relations, actors or experiences in terms of their place for democracy. In a similar vein, we might acknowledge certain things as problems and obstacles for democracy, and declare some others as unrelated for a democratic life.

Similarly, our conceptualization of the political affects our understanding of democracy. In line with the idea of politics we have, we define the subject and object of politics and the boundary of the domain of the political. Based on our definition of the political, we include certain actors, issues, relations and institutions to the domain of the political while excluding some others. Some relations of inequality, hierarchies and relations of domination are defined as political, and hence become problems of democracy, while some others are accepted as non-political, hence cannot find themselves a place in the discussion on democracy. Our definition of the political has important consequences on our understanding of democracy, which in turn determines the way we see different societies and different experiences of democracy.

The main aim of this dissertation is to develop a critique on democratic thought in Turkey. The study by no means aims to include all existing positions, perspectives or views as parts of democratic thought in Turkey. Rather, I concentrate on three important analysis of Turkish politics namely, Niyazi Berkes and his analysis of the development of secularism in Turkey; Şerif Mardin and his analysis of center-periphery relations; and finally Metin Heper and his analysis of the strong state tradition in Turkey and his idea of rational democracy.

The political history of Turkey and Turkish modernization has widely been explained with reference to a basic dichotomy between the secular modernizers, on the one hand, and religious and traditional groups, on the other. The struggle between these two has been accepted as the main source in the formation of the social and political life in Turkey. Scholars who use modernization and secularization thesis generally defend the secular position and accepting the traditional and religious groups as the main obstacles before the development of modern Turkey and consequently of Turkish democracy. In other words, the struggle between secular and religious groups amounts to the struggle between progressive and regressive forces. In establishing the institutions of a modern society, the modernizers had to deal with religion as the main source of resistance and opposition to modernization. If we want to understand the problem of democracy in Turkey, then we have to understand the sources of resistance to modernization project, according to this argument.

With his study on the development of secularism in Turkey, Niyazi Berkes has been one of the leading scholars who explain modernization in Turkey as a process of secularization. With the historical account he provides, Berkes would be accepted as an important and influential example of modernization approach in social sciences in Turkey, which put secular/religious and modern/traditional dialectic at the center of their explanations. Choosing Niyazi Berkes as one of the subjects of this study helps me to develop a critique to such studies of Turkish democracy, which sees the resistance to modernity as the main problem of democracy in Turkey.

On the other hand, in the last three decades, the explanations based on modernization school have been criticized for their inability to understand the top-down imposed character of Turkish modernity. This imposed character of modern institutions in Turkey has been the source of authoritarian reflexes and hence has been the main obstacle for Turkish democracy. Therefore, it would be misleading to equate the secular, the modern, the progressive and the democratic. Modernity and secularism as the way they developed and the form they got in Turkey have been the sources of anti-democratic and authoritarian institutions and reflexes in Turkish society. From this perspective, the rise of political Islam, the headscarf issue, and the Kurdish question should be understood not as resistance to modern society out of the remnants of the traditional past, but as the products of the peculiar characters of Turkish modernity. In these studies, what is important is to understand Turkish modernity in terms of its own dynamics and peculiar development.

Şerif Mardin has been one of the most important and influential social scientists in Turkey. With his studies on various subjects from late Ottoman history to Turkish modernity, from ideology to religion, from intellectuals and their roles in society to issues on methodology, Mardin can be accepted as one of the classics of social sciences in Turkey. What are the peculiar characteristics of Turkish modernity and its development? What is the role of religion in Turkish society and politics? Mardin has influenced many studies with his works, which provide answers and explanations to these kinds of questions. Foremost, Mardin's center-periphery model has gained a paradigmatic status in Turkish studies. From cultural studies and sociology to political science and economics, center-periphery model has been used as the main analytical tool. In recent debates on Turkish democracy such as the presidential elections, the rise of political Islam, military interventions, the decisions of the Constitutional Court, political party bans, and the illegal organizations within the state, the center-periphery opposition is used as the main explanation. With its influence, Mardin's model gains a paradigmatic status in social sciences in Turkey. Therefore, concentrating on this model amounts to questioning one of the main paradigms in Turkish studies.

Speaking of Turkish modernity, for many scholars, requires us to focus on the state and bureaucracy. The main characteristic of Turkish modernity is that it developed as a project implemented and imposed on the society by the state elite. Therefore, modernity in Turkey reinforced the power of the state

instead of diminishing it. That is to say, in terms of the existence of a strong state tradition, the Republic and Turkish modernity represent a continuity of the Ottoman past. This is why state tradition should be at the center of discussion on Turkish politics.

In political science literature, state-centered analysis has had a very important place. As it will be discussed more detailed in the following chapters, the state-centered analysis gives the state an autonomous role in the formation of social and political life of a society and tries to explain the existing dimensions of the political life with reference to the development of the state in a given society. Metin Heper has played a leading role in applying the state-centered approach to the Ottoman-Turkish polity by explaining the historical formation and development of a strong state tradition in Turkey.

An important part of studies on Turkish politics and democracy have focused on the nature, place, and role of the state and state institutions. Many students of Turkish politics argue that one of the basic obstacles for the development of democracy in Turkey has been the existence of *raison d'État* and its authoritative reflections in Turkish society. Although Heper finds the existence of the strong state tradition as problematic not because of its authoritative reflections, he explains the historical development of such a reason and mentality in Ottoman-Turkish polity. Since in his studies Heper opposes the state and civil society and claims that the strong state has developed together with a weak civil society, his studies has also been

influential on civil society studies. Metin Heper, foremost with his book *The State Tradition in Turkey*, has been very influential as the leading figure of state-centered approach in social sciences in Turkey.

It would not be wrong to claim that these three authors with their works can be accepted as the prominent figures and pioneers of the major paradigms in understanding the socio-political history of Turkey. Their works have constituted the basis or a departure point for many works and studies of Turkish politics. Concerning the frame of this study, the accounts and models they develop have also been used in explaining the problems of Turkish democracy today. To put it differently, they constitute the main historical narrative which democratic thought in Turkey is widely based on.

Besides having a paradigmatic status, there is another common point of these authors that is closely related with the critical evaluation I try to make. They explain the structure of Turkish politics through a binary opposition. In the case of Berkes, we see secular, modern, progressive and anti-secular, traditional, regressive opposition. In the case of Mardin, the fundamental paradox and struggle of Turkish politics is in between the center and the periphery. In the case of Heper, together with strong state/center and weak society/periphery, we see state elite and political elite struggle. Each author comes to the conclusion that the dualities they underline has shaped the main contours, reflexes, struggles, actors, and problems of Turkish political life. The reasons behind the existing problems of democracy, the practices of

exclusions, the attitudes and behaviors of the political actors, the failures and achievements of Turkish modernity and various other political problems are registered as the manifestation of these constitutive dichotomies.

When the dualist argument claims that the duality it defines constitutes the fundamental determinant of the main characteristic of the political life, then it is inevitably not able to explain various other relations and different actors in the society. To put it differently, it can only explain actors, relations and events as long as they can be translated into the dualism in one way or another. Since any duality, whatsoever cannot explain all kinds of actors and their relations in a given society, a dualist perspective at least employs two strategies to deal with this problem of heterogeneity and multiplicity in social and political life. It either reduces or ignores those actors and relations that do not fit into the binary opposition. First the main opposition and the dual positions are defined, and every relation and actor in the society is explained as a manifestation of this duality. Since certain elements of the relations and actors at hand do not fit into the dual perspective, their interpretation as the manifestation of the duality always comes with a degree of reduction. Or there are many other events, relations and actors that cannot be explained by a dualism or even they can resist to the binary opposition by being the instances of co-operation between two polar positions as defined by the dualism. Here comes the ignorance. Therefore, the perspectives provided by dualisms create critical blind spots when they claim to explain the fundamental dialectic behind the development and current form of a society.



The main question of this study is not related with the accuracy of their historical accounts. The question is whether the historical narrations they maintain regarding the political life in Turkey can provide a perspective where the political and democracy can be evaluated. What are the consequences of their conceptions of politics for a democratic thought? How do they approach and view democracy? What are the things they leave obscure and hidden when we use their prisms of binary oppositions and dichotomies in evaluating problems of democracy? Do they help us to see the plurality and multiplicity of inequalities, oppressions and exclusions and define them as political problems? Or, do they force those pluralities to fit into their dualities?

The main argument of the dissertation is that in their own ways, all the scholars of Turkish politics examined in the present study in their accounts, which are based on a particular dichotomy, consist of fundamental weaknesses and limitations when their analyses and binary oppositions are used as a lens through which the problems of democracy in Turkey are evaluated. Although they have different narrations, and different conceptions, I argue that the main problem in their accounts is that they have occluded the paradoxical nature of politics and democracy and that democracy has been approached from an unduly sociological, historical, and institutional perspective. As a result, different instances of the closure of politics, different inequalities, oppressions, hierarchies, dominations, and exclusions cannot be

seen and recognized as political problems, and hence as problems of democracy.

In the second chapter, my goal is to provide the conceptual and theoretical framework for the critical evaluation of Berkes, Mardin and Heper's accounts of Turkish politics. Bonnie Honig and Jacques Rancière are the main thinkers that I draw on in the theoretical discussion about the meaning of politics and democracy. The importance of Honig comes from her critique of a fundamental tendency in political theory; what she calls 'the displacement of politics'. In a similar fashion, I aim to ask a similar kind of question to the scholars of Turkish politics that I examine in the following chapters. Honig's main argument is that there has been a tendency and an urge in political theory to eliminate disruption, resistance, dissent and contestation from politics. Consequently, politics is reduced to administration, regulation and consolidation. In her critique, she develops the argument that these dimensions in politics are fundamental for a democratic politics. In other words, she tries to show the consequences of the displacement of politics by eliminating its disruptive dimension for a democratic life. The reason behind the choice of Honig as one of the theoretical source of this study is that she provides the account of politics and democracy necessary to problematize the definition of politics as administration and regulation. Honig also shows the consequences of accepting order and stability as the only aims of politics for democracy.

The second thinker that I use as my theoretical interlocutor is Jacques Rancière, who provides a theory of politics and democracy. Based on a narration of origins of democracy and politics in ancient Greece, he conceptualizes democracy and politics as synonymous. The importance of Rancière for the aim of the dissertation is the relation he theorizes between politics and equality, his distinction between politics and the police and his radical political vision of democracy. These ideas, I would suggest, help me to argue that any kind of inequality and hierarchy can be the subject of politics and politics is related with resisting, dissenting and disagreeing to consolidations and orders all of which, in one form or another, engender remainders and exclusions. Rancière's and Honig's conceptions and theories of politics and democracy are also deployed to describe the meaning of the closure of the political and to justify the argument that it is a fundamental problem of democracy. The chapters that follow are organized around the works of a particular author (Berkes, Mardin, and Heper) and can be read as critiques of their respective analyses on the development of political life in Turkey.

From the conceptual and theoretical perspective I derive from the writings of Honig and Rancière, I define what I mean by the closure of the political. First of all, the closure of the political refers to the elimination of contestation, resistance and dissent from politics. Second, it refers to limiting the scope and meaning of politics with elite negotiation, institutionalized politics, political parties, and parliamentary electoral processes. Third form of

closure means putting limits to critical reflection, accepting certain issues, rules, identities and boundaries as unquestionable and necessary for order and stability. Fourth is about the notion of the people. Taking the identity and boundary of the people as the presumption of democratic politics and leaving the people outside the political contestations. Fifth form of the closure of the political is closing the political space to certain groups, defining certain spaces as non-political. As a result, certain inequalities find themselves a secure haven from the disruption of politics. Sixth meaning is the closure is limiting or defining politics with specific institutions, actors and spheres, such as defining politics with reference to state. A democratic perspective, or a critical perspective where we aim to understand the problems in front of a democratic life, should be sensitive to all these instances of the closure of the political.

The third chapter is devoted to Niyazi Berkes's historical account of the development of secularism in Turkey. First, I present the main arguments of his analysis where he makes secularization as the meta-narrative of the Turkish modernization and determines the main struggle between progressive, modern, secular forces and regressive, traditional, anti-secular forces. Then, in my critical evaluation, I problematize his understanding of secularism and the essentialist relation he constructs between secularism and democracy. In doing this, I've drawn on the main arguments of the secularization thesis and try to provide a perspective on the relation between secularism and democracy where the political lies at its center. Additionally, I critically evaluate the

limitations and weaknesses of the binary opposition between secular and anti-secular that Berkes maintains, his understanding of history and his conception of politics are the subjects of my criticism.

In the fourth chapter, I examine Şerif Mardin's analysis of center-periphery cleavage as the main opposition and paradox of Turkish modernization. Before presenting the center-periphery opposition as explained by Mardin, I provide a brief summary of the meaning of center and periphery in Edward Shils's model, upon which Mardin based his own account in analyzing the Turkish case. In my critical evaluation of Mardin's center-periphery duality as a perspective for a democratic thought, I isolate and focus on his conception of the periphery as a monolithic entity, his characterization of the peripheral challenges with democratic impulses and his emphasis on social integration. In line with the main goal of the dissertation and with the theoretical position I develop in the second chapter, my argument is that Mardin's center-periphery opposition not only leaves different mechanisms, institutions, actors, which close the political, out of sight of politics but also provides a ground for essentialization of the center and the periphery with authoritarian and democratic positions, respectively.

In the next chapter I examine Metin Heper's account on the state tradition and the consolidation of democracy in Turkey. In his analysis on the existence of strong state and weak civil society in Turkey, Heper employs a state-centric approach. Therefore, I summarize the main arguments of the

state-centric approach. Here, I limit the discussion with the theories that Heper draws on. A presentation of Heper's views on the state tradition in Turkey is followed by his arguments about the problems of the consolidation of Turkish democracy. The importance of these arguments for the main objective of this chapter is that Heper develops his thesis on democratic consolidation on the basis of his account on the strong state tradition and therefore help us to discuss the limitations of Heper's perspective on democracy and its problems. In doing this, I also give a brief summary of consolidation of democracy theories in order to understand Heper's arguments adequately. In my critical evaluation of Heper's ideas, I try to problematize his understanding of consolidation of democracy as a balanced elite struggle. The state elites and the political elites, who have been the two parties of the main struggle in Turkish politics representing two opposed mentalities, should take into account the other sides of considerations and try to establish an equilibrium between these considerations, that is between particular interests and the common good. As the second point of criticism, and similar to the previous two chapters, I try to show the duality that Heper uses and as the last part, Heper's idea of rational democracy is evaluated in terms of the tendency of depoliticization inherent in his conception.

As Sheldon Wolin argues, "each mode of consideration is a sort of searching light elucidating some of the facts and retreating the remained into an omitted background" (Wolin, 2006: 32). Such an omission can be claimed for the considerations of this dissertation as well. Yet, my argument is that the

mode of consideration I have and the position I try to take is the position of the political and a consideration that takes the paradoxical and disruptive dimension of politics into account as a productive impulse for democracy.

At this point, a clarification is warranted regarding my use of the concepts of politics and the political. In many works of different political thinkers, the political and politics are conceptualized indicating different and opposed dimensions of political life. However, following Rancière's opposition between politics and police, I tend to use these concepts interchangeably implying the same radical impulse in politics.

## CHAPTER II

### DEMOCRACY: PARADOXICAL, POLEMICAL, POLITICAL

...if women are entitled to go to  
the scaffold, they are entitled to  
go to the Assembly.

Olympe de Gouges

In this chapter, my goal is to provide a discussion on the concepts of politics and democracy in order to frame what I mean by the closure of the political. In doing this, I will draw upon the views of Bonnie Honig and Jacques Rancière. These two thinkers, I would suggest, not only provide a powerful and radical conception of politics and democracy, but also they show the relation of these two concepts, which will help me to justify why the closure of the political is a fundamental problem of democracy.

#### **2.1 Bonnie Honig and the Displacement of Politics**

The writings of Bonnie Honig consist of a powerful critique of theories of politics and democracy, theories that aim to eliminate dissent and disruption



from politics permanently, and her account of politics, with a central emphasis on dissent, suggests elements of an agonistic theory of democracy as an alternative vision. In *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (1993), Honig critiques a fundamental tendency in political theory, origins of which can be traced back to Plato. The main aim of this form of political thinking is to find out an ideal blueprint, a single, comprehensive philosophical foundation for a political life and social harmony, where a final closure can be achieved, disruption and conflict would be erased from political life. The main purpose of Honig's critique is to expose the consequences and implications of such a goal in political theory for democratic thought. Is such a project of final closure of conflict possible? Should we desire for such a closure? What does such a project really mean? What kind of costs does it bring about for democracy? In its simplest form, for Honig, the aim to erase disruption, dissonance, conflict and resistance from political life for the sake of order and harmony means to eliminate politics itself.<sup>1</sup>

In her critique, Honig makes a distinction between, what she calls, virtue and *virtù* theories of politics, which inform two different and opposed understandings of politics<sup>2</sup>. She employs this distinction, as her 'negotiating

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to Honig, there are different scholars who underline a similar concern that conflict and resistance have not given adequate place in political and democratic thought in the dominant traditions and conceptualizations. William Connolly (1995), Chantal Mouffe (1993), Simon Critchley (2005), Sofia Näsström (2007), Benjamin Arditì (1999), Alan Keenan (2000).

<sup>2</sup> In her book, Honig examines the works of Immanuel Kant, John Rawls and Michael Sandel as the examples of the virtue theories, and the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Hannah Arendt as the *virtù* theories. In the following discussion, I will not present and evaluate

positions’, in order to problematize the ‘mysteries phenomenon’ of ‘the displacement of politics’ and to reveal the source that is responsible from it. According to Honig’s definition, virtue theories “confine politics to the judicial, administrative, or regulative tasks of stabilizing moral and political subjects, building consensus, maintaining agreement, or consolidating communities and identities” (Honig, 1993: 2). When the right kinds of institutions, arrangements and procedures are established, conflict and instability can be eliminated from political life permanently. Here, politics appears to be related and limited with the aim of establishing settlements, drawing boundaries and eliminating disruptions and contestation. After reaching this agreement and settlement, politics turns out to be nothing but administration and regulation in line with the accepted assumptions and principles, within the established boundaries and among the recognized actors. The main impulse nested within virtue theories of politics, for Honig, is a desire for the closure of political space and consolidation of community and identity as the way they were settled. They are ‘strategies of consolidation’ based on ‘elimination of contestation’ (Honig, 1993: 200).

Representing the opposite attitude, *virtù* theories conceptualize politics “as a disruptive practice that resists the consolidations and closure of administrative and juridical settlement for the sake of the perpetuity of political contest”. It underlines the disruptive and agonistic impulse within

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Honig’s particular engagement with these thinkers. Instead, I will focus on her conceptual framework and basic distinctions she uses in this critical engagement. In so doing, I aim to explicate Honig’s vision of politics and democracy, which are the conclusions she reaches after her critical evaluation of virtue and *virtù* theories of politics.

politics, which resists to any settlement, order, identity and closure. *Virtù* theories celebrate the side of politics, which is tried to be eliminated by virtue theories.

The crucial mistake in virtue theories comes from their assumption of the possibility of such a comprehensive foundation, which is expected to include everyone. However, such a project encounters with the problem of the unfit again and again; a person, a place, an event, an identity, a group always unfits and hence disturbs the aspired order of things. This moment of encounter turns out to be the moment when these projects of order and harmony manifest their despotic character in the way they treat the problem of unfittedness. Indeed, the existence of unfittedness as inevitable excess to the subject, identity or community that is tried to be consolidated, is seen as a *problem* by virtue theories in the first place. On the contrary, from the perspective of *virtù* theories, far from being a problem, it is the very source of politics. In other words, there is nothing to be solved but to celebrate when life, world or self shows its excess and resistance to the existing order.

Honig uses the metaphor of ‘remainder’ to discuss the issue of unfittedness in her attempt of negotiating between these two polar attitudes. To understand Honig’s idea of politics and democracy, her notion of remainder should be clearly understood. Remainders, as she puts, are “resistances engendered by...ordinary human attempts systematically to organize the world conceptually, categorically, linguistically, politically,

culturally, and socially as well as morally” (Honig, 1993: 213). Honig’s notion of remainder is based on two fundamental arguments. First, remainders are not prior to any order and settlement; rather they are the consequences of order. In other words, every political and moral order generates its own remainders. Second, there is no order without remainders. Such a perspective, Honig argues, has the advantage of seeing the responsibility of the established rules and institutions from the existence of remainders. She argues that politics can free itself from being reduced to administration and gains a democratic character as long as it cares for the remainders of any order and settlement and acknowledging its own responsibility. This is also where the superiority of *virtù* theories lies.

One of the important problems of virtue theories is that they refuse their own responsibility in the existence of remainders. From the perspective of virtue theories, remainders are excluded because of their own abnormality, aberration or deviation. Therefore, remainders are responsible from their own exclusion. Since the problem lies in remainders not in the order, remainders should be treated as problems to be cured, educated, disciplined, corrected, or contained, marginalized, criminalized, expelled. Indeed, on the basis of their claim of closure and order lies their disavowal of their own responsibility from remainders. On the contrary, the *virtù* position necessitates cultivating an ethic sensible to the remainders of any settlement and acknowledges its own responsibility about the exclusionary practices. As a result, openness to critique, contestation and unsettlement follows. As Honig (1993: 3) points out,

“it is for the sake of those perpetually generated remainders of politics that *virtù* theorists seek to secure the perpetuity of political contest.” That is to say, *virtù* theories, and also Honig, whose radical and agonistic perspective relies more on politics of *virtù*, are not defending dissent and agonistic dimensions of politics for the sake of disruption and resistance itself. Indeed, political contest and dissent should be celebrated and placed at the center of a democratic thinking in order to cultivate a vision that opens political space for the remainders of any kind of order. The permanent openness of political space is the constitutive element of a democratic polity. And this openness is related with not only about the dialogue and political struggle between the already accepted and recognized actors of a given regime, but also – even more – related with the remainders of the system, i.e. selves, groups, ideas and beliefs that are not accepted as legitimate actors in the first place. Democratic politics is the moment when remainders of an order, those who are excluded, oppressed, and seen as illegitimate arise and challenge the existing institutions, rules, norms and procedures. To put it differently, democratic politics is the moment when the existing order finds itself in a position to face with the remainders it engenders. This is why democratic politics is disruptive.

For Honig, the crucial point is not limited with the protection of political space. The proliferation of political space is also a critical dimension of democratic politics. Nothing should be kept outside or immune from political intervention of a political actor. The open-ended nature of politics of

*virtù* also means that politics cannot be placed within only one domain. It is “boundless, excessive, uncontrollable, unpredictable, and self-surprising” (Honig, 1993: 119). One consequence of thinking politics in these terms is to go beyond the boundaries of institutions and structure of the state. The complementary part of Honig’s (1993: 121) argument that “[n]othing is ontologically protected from politicization” is her anti-foundationalist vision of politics. For her, there are no “prepolitical or apolitical space occupied by natural law or self-evident truths” (Honig, 1993:9) upon which politics rests. This is the reason behind the possibility of politics in the first place. She argues, “even foundationally secured foundations are always imperfect, fissured, or incomplete and that these imperfections are the spaces of politics, the space from which to resist and engage the would-be perfect closures of god, self-evidence, law, identity, or community” (Honig, 1993:9). It is worth to note that such a view of politics informs an understanding of plurality through which we declare our openness to appreciate differences. The closure of politics comes up with its cost of homogenization and violence to plurality. From Honig’s perspective, then, democracy becomes related with cultivation of a critical sensibility against those moments that close politics and reduce it to administration and regulation.

It is important to clarify the relation between virtue and *virtù* politics as much as differentiate them from each other not only for an adequate understanding of Honig’s vision but also for the theoretical position of the study at hand. Although virtue and *virtù* distinction informs two diametrically

opposed forms of political thinking and *virtù* appears as more central for a democratic politics, this does not necessarily mean that virtue politics should be eliminated or has nothing to do with democratic thought at all. Otherwise it would be making the same mistake with virtue theories. The heart of the matter is to understand the inevitability of and the undecidability between both dimensions. As Honig (1993: 200) underlines that this distinction is the negotiating positions of her in order to “isolate and exaggerate certain features of politics and political thought.” As a matter of fact, she problematizes the very distinction she offers between virtue and *virtù* to clarify the idea of democracy and politics she defends. Honig (1993: 201) asks;

What if virtue and *virtù* represent not two distinct and self-sufficient options but two aspects of political life? What if they signal two co-existing and conflicting impulses, the desire to decide crucial undecidabilities for the sake of human goods that thrive most vigorously in stable, predictable settings, and the will to contest established patterns, institutions, and identities for the sake of the remainders engendered by their patternings and for the sake of the democratic possibilities endangered by their petrifications?

By opposing these two different kinds of politics, Honig does not force us to choose one of them. She claims that no such choice can be made since politics cannot be possible without either of these impulses. This is why those who yearn for closure and final settlement can reach their aim by repressing the opposing dimension of politics. What is crucial and distinctive about democratic politics is its ability to embrace and engage both dimensions, however they are paradoxical with each other. She claims that any understanding of politics that tries to exclude or depoliticize either dimension

becomes distant from being democratic. Yet, it should be noted here that this does not mean that these two dimensions constitute politics as a univocal whole and each part supplement the other. Neither does it mean that the goal of democratic politics is to establish equilibrium between these two impulses. On the contrary, what is important for a democratic politics is the fact that the relation in question is one of a paradox. The source of democratic politics, the place where democratic force should engender, and the political space is opened is the very encounter of these two impulses. The very undecidability between these two faces of politics is the very guarantee of the permanent openness of political space and contestation resisting against any kind of closure and consolidation whatever its source is.

Politics consists of practices of settlement *and* unsettlement, of disruption *and* administration, of extraordinary events or foundings *and* mundane maintenances. It consists of the forces that decide undecidabilities *and* of those that resist those decisions at the same time. To reduce politics to only one side of each of these operations, to depoliticize the opposite side...is to displace politics, to deny the effects of power in some of life's arenas for the sake of the perceived goods that power stabilizes under the guise of knowledge, respect, rationality, cognition, nature, or the public-private distinction itself. (Honig, 1993: 205)<sup>3</sup>

Democracy, that is to say, should embrace these two paradoxical moments i.e. boundary-drawing, reaching a consensus and settlement, on the one hand and the moment of disruption, unsettlement, contestation and resistance, on the other. Democracy, from this theoretical position, should be understood as a way of coexistence in which resistance and dissent of the

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<sup>3</sup> Emphasis original



remainders are not accepted as problems to get rid of, or as impulses of politics to be tamed. On the contrary, what makes a polity democratic is the ability to celebrate resistance and dissent as its constitutive moments. To put it differently, “endorsement of perpetual dissent and responsiveness to the vitality of resistance” makes a polity democratic. As Honig (1995: 138) puts, “[r]esistability, openness, creativity and incompleteness are the *sin quo non* of politics.”

There are, at least, two fundamental importance of Honig’s vision of politics and democracy for the conceptual and theoretical framework of the dissertation. First is a kind of diagnostic value. Honig helps us to place the displacement and closure of politics at the center of a discussion on democracy and to define it as a fundamental problem for democratic politics. This problematic is not something secondary or peripheral compared to a conception of democracy as a political regime, as a matter of political parties, elections and institutional structure of the state. Second is a theoretical value. Honig points out different levels and modalities of closure and displacement of politics. On the one hand, politics is displaced and political space is closed to different identities, subjects, heterogeneities and plurality of life. On the other hand, politics is closed and displaced when it is conceptualized merely with reference to actors, institutions and procedures of a specific sphere, that of the state, and consequently reduced to a specific practice and functions, that of regulation and administration. As a result of these instances of the closure of politics, various parts of self and life are depoliticized. Critical

reflection, dissent and resistance are silenced. Honig's emphasis on the paradoxical nature of politics also helps us to understand that what is important is to maintain the permanent openness of political space and contestation, instead of opening it for the inclusion of certain identities and closing it again for the sake of new order of things. As it is underlined above and discussed more in detail at the end of this chapter, paradox of politics is constitutive for democracy. Any attempt to solve the paradox comes up with the displacement of politics.

Although Honig's discussion and conceptualization of democracy and politics is important because of the above-mentioned reasons for the dissertation, she seems to leave us vulnerable in the question of the content of dissent and disruption. Is it possible to argue that any kind of disruption has a democratic impact? True, Honig does not imply that the content of disruption has no relevance in evaluating its democratic character. What is important is that it is related with the remainders. Yet, the question of the content of contestation, dissent and disruption in politics is not absent but subtle in Honig and need to be discussed more.

At this point, I would like to draw on another very influential thinker, Jacques Rancière, who also defines democracy as a rupture in the order of things, or to use his notions, in the distribution of the sensible. The importance of Rancière, as discussed in what follows, comes from his theory on the relation between politics and equality, on the one hand, and between

politics and democracy, on the other. I would argue that Rancière provides a stronger stance, a more radically political one, to think democracy and to problematize main conceptions of politics and democracy, which are dominant today.

## **2.2 Jacques Rancière: Politics as Unruliness**

Jacques Rancière is one of the most important and influential contemporary French philosopher with his writings on an immense variety of subjects from philosophy, politics, and history to aesthetics, literature and art. The importance of Rancière's work is not only in his ability to intervene the discussions in different disciplines and subjects, but also in his ability to undo the very disciplinary distinctions. In the early stages of his career, Rancière was close to Althusser and as a pupil of him; he was one of the co-authors of the famous *Lire le Capital* in 1965. This close affinity with Althusser and structuralist Marxism did not last long. 1968 events marked the breaking point. Because of Althusser's attitude to these events, Rancière distanced from him. As Rancière wrote in *La leçon d'Althusser, (the Lesson of Althusser, 1974)* where he criticized his teacher, the main problem is the distinction between "the necessarily deluded experience of social agents and the quasi-scientific authority of theory" (Rancière, 2003b: 191). Such a distinction between the masses, who have no ability and time for thinking to understand the structure around them, and theoretician, who can see

everything clearly by an ability of standing outside and above everything, is based on the assumption of an inequality between these two groups. Where the formers cannot speak for themselves, the latter has the right to speak for others. This problematic implies a fundamental question: ‘who has the right to think? And behind this question lies the issue of equality. And with this issue, Rancière has been preoccupied in almost all writings, especially in his political thought.

Out of his uneasiness and disagreement with Althusser and concern on equality, Rancière started to produce his own works. In 1981, he published *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (1991a), as a study on social history, where he tries to show the ability and intelligence of the working class for thinking and speaking for themselves. In this book, instead of constructing a philosophical account, Rancière made an archival study and documented everyday activities of the French working class of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as thinkers, poets, and philosophers in order to show how these workers transgress the boundary between mental and manual labor, between those who know, thus have right to speak for others, and those who are ignorant, thus need someone else to teach them and speak for them. In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1991b), Rancière presents an alternative pedagogical principle, based on the experience of Joseph Jacotet, who established his approach of teaching as a challenge to the assumption that there is an inequality between students and teachers. On the contrary, Jacotet’s experience shows us that equality is not

the aim of education but its starting point. Such an axiomatic assumption of equality, as discussed more detailed later in this chapter, plays a central role in Rancière's conception of politics and his vision of democracy.<sup>4</sup>

Rancière has increasingly focused on politics and democracy since 1990s.<sup>5</sup> Rancière notes that the developments during 1980s and 1990s brought about the necessity of re-thinking democracy and politics. After the collapse of the Soviet system, it has been claimed that liberal formal democracy is the only viable form of democracy. As Rancière underlines, the triumph of liberal democracy leads the identification of democracy with liberal economy and increasing neo-liberal hegemony creates the main problem "as the internal exhaustion of democratic debate" (Rancière, 2004e: 3). He states, "the end of socialist alternative, then, did not signify any renewal of democratic debate. Instead, it signified the reduction of democratic life to the management of the local consequences of global economic necessity" (Rancière, 200e: 3-4). Then, it becomes necessary to question the existing and prevailing conceptions of democracy and politics in order to reveal the anti-democratic impulses and the moments of closure of politics in today's liberal

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<sup>4</sup> See Ross Krinsten (1991) for Rancière's challenge to both Althusser's and Bourdieu's ideas on education. The distinctive stance of Rancière comes from his idea of equality as a presupposition of education. For him, Althusser and Bourdieu start from the assumption that there is an inequality between those who possess knowledge and those who don't. Hence, the function of education is the elimination of this inequality by transferring the knowledge to the ignorant masses. The main argument of Rancière is that those who start from inequality, like Althusser and Bourdieu, end up with rediscovering inequality at the end.

<sup>5</sup> The major works of Jacques Rancière on democracy and politics: *Dis-agreement: Politics and Philosophy*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, *On the Shores of Politics*, London: Verso, 1995, "Ten Thesis on politics", in *Theory and Event*, 5:3, 2001, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London: Continuum Books, 2004, *Hatred of Democracy*, Verso, 2007

democracies.<sup>6</sup> By questioning the liberal conceptions of politics, equality and democracy and by “highlighting the notion of democracy linked to a radically egalitarian notion of politics” (Hewlett, 2007: 96), Rancière develops a critique of liberalism. Yet, in doing this, he does not limit his inquiry with recent accounts of democracy and politics, and starts from a rereading of the classical texts of the tradition of Western political thought. Rancière’s political thought is an attempt of rethinking and refounding democracy based on a reinterpretation of the origins of democracy in ancient Greece.

On the other hand, again with the collapse of the Soviet system, it has been argued that Marxism also lost its position as an alternative in the Western political thought. One important consequence of this has been a resurgence of the concept of the political, which had been ignored by the Marxist school of thought. The return of the political is another discussion that Rancière wants to contribute. The importance of the political in many different interpretations of the concept after 1980s comes from the fact that a theory of the political has always been a missing piece not only in Marxism but also in liberalism. Therefore, a theory of the political has seen as a possible source of a critique of liberalism in many post-Marxist schools.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Similar to Honig, Rancière thinks displacement of politics and thus reduction of democracy into administration and management is a fundamental problem.

<sup>7</sup> The centrality of the notion of the political in post-Marxist literature in developing a critique on liberal democracies has different sources and different forms. It has been argued that one of the basic weaknesses of Marxism comes from the inability to see the autonomy of the political. Giving the political its due importance can develop a powerful critique of liberal democracy. On the one hand, the scholars, especially those around the journal *Telos*, have tried to provide the missing theory of the political in Marxism by drawing on the works of Carl Schmitt as being one of the most powerful critique of liberalism and theoretician of the political. On the other hand, the Essex school can be accepted as another attempt of

With these concerns at the background, Rancière provides a radically political reinterpretation of democracy. One main question of this reinterpretation is, what is the specificity of democracy and of politics. Rancière's political thought is based on the premise that democracy and politics share the same originating moment. Thus, an inquiry on democracy is at the same time an inquiry on politics, and one is not imaginable without the other. Hence his project of rethinking democracy is based on "the problematic of the political itself" (Dillon, 2005: 430). Rancière (2008:3) summarizes his main aim as follows;

I've been attempted to rethink democracy by refusing both its official identification with the state forms and lifestyles of rich societies and denunciation of it as a form that masks the realities of domination...In opposition to this dominant view, I've reactivated the real scandal of democracy – which is that it reveals the ultimate absence of legitimacy of any government. As the foundation of politics it asserts the equal capacity of anyone and everyone to be either governor or governed. I've thus been led to conceive democracy as the deployment of forms of action that activate anyone's equality with anyone else and not as form of state or a kind of society.

As it is mentioned before, Rancière's project is that of radically refounding democracy. With this project, Rancière develops both a major critique to the tradition of Western political thought and a critique to the major contemporary visions and representations of democracy. This refounding project begins with a reinterpretation of the classical texts of

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patching Marxism with a strong interest on a theory of the political. Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen, 1987; Ernst-Wolfgang Bockenforde, 1996; Laclau and Mouffe, 2001; Mouffe, 1996, 2006.

political thought. As Gilles Labelle rightly underlines that Rancière suggests ‘a narrative of refoundation’, which is ‘a narrative about origins’ of democracy and politics in ancient Greece<sup>8</sup> (Labelle, 2001).

For Rancière, politics proper begins when *demos* emerged and claimed to take part in ruling, without having any specific qualification and entitlement to rule. In doing this, the *demos* appropriated the quality of all – freedom – as its own. Beginning of politics proper, as Rancière asserts, is the beginning of democracy. Rancière explicates this revolutionary moment of beginning through a discussion on Plato’s and Aristotle’s ideas of the order of the city. For both, the order in the city can only be possible by the establishment of a geometric equality, which determines the parts of the city, and distributes the community shares according to the *axia*<sup>9</sup> of each part. Each party has a specific quality, which is the basis of the partitioning of the community. Geometric equality, different than a simple arithmetic equality, is related with partitioning, proportion, and distribution of the community shares accordingly. Each *axia*, according to its specific quality brings a value to the community and in return gets the corresponding share from the common power. The common harmony, the order of the city based on ‘an ideal geometry’, to use Rancière’s terms, is nothing but a count of city parts, “a count whose complexities may mask a fundamental miscount”, which is “the

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<sup>8</sup> Together with Rancière, Labelle (2001) discusses Castoriadis as another prominent example of refounding democracy through a narration of origin in ancient Greece. These two examples, for him, also demonstrate the decreasing influence of the Communist party and the structuralist Marxism in France. Under the influence of the Party and the structuralist Marxism, democracy and politics were neither relevant issues to discuss nor a viable project.

<sup>9</sup> *Axia*, is a Greek word, which means worth, value; a man’s due, merit.



very stuff of politics” (Rancière, 1998: 6). Rancière points out, “what the ‘classics’ teach us first and foremost is that politics is not a matter of ties between individuals or of relationship between individuals and the community. Politics arises from a count of community ‘parts’, which is always a false count, a double count, or a miscount” (Rancière, 1998: 6).

Both Plato and Aristotle, in different ways, try to define a proper form of count of the community through which the necessary qualifications for ruling can be explained. Rancière mentions Plato’s list of qualifications for ruling in Book III of the *Laws* (Plato, 2008; Rancière, 2001). The sources of the capacities for ruling, for Plato, are birth (being old, parent, master, and noble), natural superiority (being strong), virtue (having knowledge), and the choice of god (having lot or chance). Rancière indicates that with the last category of pure chance, Plato designates democracy. Only democracy is based on pure chance just because of the fact that no proper qualification is defined for ruling. Absence of qualification is the criterion of ruling. As Rancière (2001) puts “democracy is the specific situation in which there is an absence of qualifications that, in turn, becomes the qualification for the exercise of a democratic *arkhê*.”<sup>10</sup>

In Aristotle, there are three parts of the city with three corresponding *axiai*: the wealth of the *oligoi*, the virtue of the *aristoi*, and the freedom of the *demos*. For Aristotle, although there are three political regimes corresponding

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<sup>10</sup> *arkhê*, a Greek word meaning the beginning or the first principle of the world

each, the best regime is a combination reached by “the proportional addition of respective qualities” (in Rancière 1998:7). Here again what problematic for a proper count is the demos. This Aristotelian partitioning is central in Rancière’s account in order to show the disruptive gesture of the demos in its claim on ruling. The demos, by claiming to be a part in ruling, deploys a constitutive wrong to the (ac)count of the community. This gesture is crucial for Rancière to understand the beginning of democracy and politics.

In his narration on the beginning of politics, Rancière infers three constitutive gestures informing the meaning of politics and democracy. First is the identification of the part with the whole by appropriating the quality of everyone. Second, demos disrupts and unsettles the order of the city by constituting a wrong to the count of the parts of the community. Third is that the political act of the demos is based on the presupposition of equality. Let me discuss these three gestures in order to reach a more clear and adequate understanding of Rancière’s political thought.

In the Aristotelian partitioning of the community, the (mis)count is related to the demos and its quality of being free. It is obvious that those parts other than demos have qualities and entitlements specific to them. Their qualifications – wealth or virtue – demarcate and differentiate them from others. Whereas freedom is not a property exclusively belongs to the demos. Their qualification is freedom just because of the fact that they don’t have any peculiar qualification of their own. As Rancière (1998: 9) puts, “the people

who make up the people are in fact simply free *like* the rest.”<sup>11</sup> Demos, in order to be visible and to overcome the absence of quality by usurping the quality of all as its own. Indeed, this is not an act of inclusion by becoming another part; instead it is an act of making impossible the very possibility of counting the parts. Žižek (in Rancière, 1995:70) explains this claim in the following way: “They [the demos] say, ‘we – the ‘nothing’, not counted in the order – are the people, we are All against others who stand only for their particular privileged interests”. The part that has no part becomes the whole. This is what Žižek calls ‘a kind of short-circuit between the Universal and the Particular’, and from Rancière’s perspective, politics proper has always this ‘paradox of the singular’. The part that has no part, the non-part claims to be the embodiment of the common, of the whole by appropriating a quality of all as its own. Demos, initially, is the name of a non-part of the community who does not have any qualification to take part in ruling and to be taken into (ac)count. In other words, it is the name of the singular. As a result of their usurpation of the quality of all to take part in ruling, demos becomes the name of the community that is the universal. As Žižek (in Rancière, 1995:70) states, this “is the elementary gesture of politicization, discernible in all great democratic events from French Revolution to the demise of ex-European Socialism.” Rancière argues,

The demos is that many that is identical to the whole: the many as one, the part as the whole, the all in all. The nonexistent qualitative difference of freedom produces this impossible equation that cannot be understood within the divisions of arithmetical equality, requiring the compensation of profits and

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<sup>11</sup> emphasis in original

losses, or of geometric equality, which is supposed to link a quality to a rank. By the same token, the people are always more or less than the people. (Rancière, 1998: 10)

Understanding this dimension of politics leads a vision of democracy where we can develop a critical perspective to the notion of the people. The definition of the people is based on a constitutive wrong. The demos, as a result of the appropriation of the quality of all, identifies its name ‘with the name of the community itself’. In other words the part claims to be the whole. The demos claim to be the people. Rancière (1998: 9) says, “whoever has no part – the poor of ancient times, the third estate, the modern proletariat – cannot in fact have any other part other than all or nothing.” Hence, the sum of the parts never equals to the whole. This initial act of appropriation by the demos places a void and a supplement, at the same time, to the definition of the people.<sup>12</sup> This is why the identity of the people becomes permanently contentious and open to question. A discussion on democracy cannot take the definition of the people as given, as complete and closed. The dispute

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<sup>12</sup> Regarding the notion of void, Rancière underlines the similarity between his understanding of the people and democracy with those of Claude Lefort. As Lefort famously argues that the peculiarity of modern democracy is that power is an empty place, which cannot be embodied and occupied permanently. This is the reason behind the gap between the symbolic and the real. (Lefort, 1989:225). For Rancière, democratic void finds its structural meaning in Lefort’s understanding of democracy. Democracy is related with a void. The power belongs to no one. This emptiness and void in democracy is its peculiarity and uniqueness. Yet, it also makes democracy risky. For Lefort, any usurpation of this void, empty space of power, would lead, and did lead, to totalitarianism. What is critical to democracy is the permanency of this void, this emptiness. Although Rancière agrees this definition of structural void in democracy, he does not think that it is related with modern democracy, where the void was created by the disincorporation of king’s two bodies. Rather, for Rancière, it is related not with the king’s but people’s two bodies. “It is initially the people, and not the king, that has a double body and this duality is nothing other than the supplement through which politics exists: a supplement to all social (ac)counts and an exception to all logics of domination.” (Rancière, 2001: Theses 5, also in Blechman, Chari, Hasan 2005: 288)

regarding the common, the people and the whole is the reason behind the beginning of politics and also of democracy.<sup>13</sup>

The second gesture as the constitutive element of politics in Ranciere's narration of the beginning is that politics is an act of dis-agreement. Politics is not simply a renegotiation between those who rule and ruled, or a claim of inclusion raised by the excluded parties. It is the expression of a disagreement by the demos to the very idea of counting community parts in terms of specific qualifications. It unsettles and destabilizes the order of the city, the natural functional order of the social body and its parts. The beginning of politics, in Ranciere (1998:13), is "the deployment of a wrong or of a fundamental dispute." Politics in this sense counter-acts to the idea of founding the city and its order on the *arkhê*. As he (2001:3) claims, politics is the very impossibility of *arkhê*; it "is a specific rupture in the logic of *arkhê*". To put it differently, and more radically, politics is inherently *an-arkhic*.

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<sup>13</sup> The people and its paradoxical and contingent nature has been underlined and discussed with many contemporary political theorists, particularly in terms of the discussion on the paradox of founding. In her article on the question of the people, Näsström (2007:624-658) argues that generally the people is accepted as the source of legitimacy for governments, policies, and parties. Yet, the crucial question that should be asked, yet always neglected, is the legitimacy of the people itself. The paradox of founding makes the legitimacy of the people problematic, and even permanently open. The paradox of founding implies "the impossibility of the people to account for its own constitution." To follow a more Schmittian line of argument, the people is the constituent subject of the political act of founding. This is what makes a regime democratic for Schmitt (Schmitt, 2008). Yet, the people is also the product of the act of founding, which is also an act of demarcation, separation of the people from another. How can something be the product of its own action? One of the original expression of this paradox can be found in J.J.Rousseau. In *The Social Contract* (1968), Rousseau defines the paradox of founding; "In order for a nascent people to appreciate sound political maxims and follow the fundamental rules of statecraft, the effect would have to become the cause; the social spirit, which should be the product of the way in which the country was founded would have to preside over the founding itself." (Rousseau, 1968: Book II Chp.7). For different accounts of the paradox of founding and the people as a permanently contentious category, see; Canovan, 2005; Honig, 2001; Honig, 2007; Keenan,2003; Connolly, 1995; Mouffe, 2000; Kalyvas, 2008; Lindahl, 2007.

The third gesture found in the beginning of politics is that politics presupposes equality. Politics is ‘a polemical expression and performative verification’ of equality. It is not a claim to be equal; it is the very enactment and manifestation of equality against established hierarchies and inequalities. It is the reenactment and reaffirmation of the equality, which always there yet always denied for the part of those who have no part. Rancière’s notion of equality has a crucial role in his overall political thought. It is possible to point out two dimensions of his idea of equality. For him, equality is fundamental or axiomatic and it is heterogeneous.

Equality is fundamental because it is the presupposition not only behind the act of disagreement and dissensus, which unsettles the established inequalities and hierarchies, but also it is behind inequalities and superior-inferior relations. For Rancière, every unequal and hierarchical relation presupposes a fundamental equality between parties. In other words, equality is the axiom behind inequality, which later denies its own axiom. As Dillon (2005: 430) puts, “it is the absent presence of equality that both enables social order and allows its hierarchy of power relations to be challenged.”

As a conclusion of his argument about the axiomatic quality of equality, Rancière asserts that any social order is based on a primary contradiction. Social order means that there is a form of division of labour between obedience and command. Some people commands, some others obey.

In other words, there is an unequal and asymmetrical relation between these groups. Yet, as Rancière puts, in order to obey, one should understand the order and the fact of his/her inferiority. For instance, the slave, in ancient Greece, was accepted in between animal and man. The slave has more than voice as being part of the linguistic community. But this participation is limited with understanding logos and does not go so far as possessing logos. Otherwise, the difference between freedom and slavery would be undermined. This is why in Aristotle, there is a double count. The first one is related with the distinction between man and animal based on the capacity to speak. According to this distinction, all men are equal in terms of their difference from animals. The second count, on the other hand, enables the distinction between freeman and slave. The former has the possession of logos, whereas the latter's capacity is limited with understanding it. The conclusion Rancière reaches is that the second count, which justifies the inequality between freeman and slave can only be possible by the first count, which denotes equality of all.

In Rancière's political thought, the possibility and functioning of every social order is based on the presupposition of a fundamental equality and then, its denial. This is the inevitable contradiction of any social order. Politics, then, occurs as the manifestation of this contradiction by forcing the order to face with its own presupposition. "Inegalitarian society" argues Rancière (2007: 48), "can only function thanks to a multitude of egalitarian relations. It is this intrication of equality in inequality that the democratic scandal makes

manifest in order to make it the basis of public power”. This is why, in Rancière’s vision, equality is heterogeneous to any social order. Affirmation and verification of the fundamental equality always disrupts the functioning of the social order and unsettles the existing inequalities and hierarchies. The presupposition of equality of anyone and everyone reveals ‘the sheer contingency of any social order’, which not only denies the equality as their basic presupposition but also the very contingency of its own historical existence. In a similar vein, the remainders in Honig’s account have the same function. For any social order, which has the urge to anchor itself to an unquestionable self-evident foundation, encountering with the remainders amounts to an encounter with its own contingency.

For Rancière, political act is an act of *mise en scène*, an act of ‘putting on stage’, an act of being seen, being visible. Equality is staged by acting politically. Political act, therefore, is a manifestation of the fundamental equality. It is not a demand for recognition as equal. What is very critical in Rancière’s vision of politics is that he does not celebrate antagonism for itself without any consideration about the content of the antagonistic relation. As he points out, “politics has its own universal, its own measure that is equality.” Rancière’s idea of equality as the presupposition of politics enables him to differentiate different forms of claims of inclusion, or of disagreement and dissensus from democratic and political ones. The mere fact of resisting to the existing order and challenging the existing distribution of the sensible does not make a claim, a group, an event political and hence democratic. Equality



should be the presupposition of politics. Any attempt of replacing the existing form of inequality with another one won't be political in Rancière's sense of the term.

Rancière also explicates the idea of politics as a disruptive act through his elaboration on the relation between politics and philosophy. Politics, or the contentious empty freedom of the demos, challenges the logics of order, of *arkhê* – which is the project of philosophy, for Rancière – with 'the equality of anyone at all with anyone else'. The beginning of politics, which is the origin of democracy, countered philosophy by showing the absence of *arkhê*, of the contingency of any social order. This is, what Rancière (1998: 15) calls, 'the initial scandal of politics', which makes politics a problem for philosophy.

Philosophy becomes 'political' when it embraces aporia or the quandary to politics. Politics...is that activity which turns on equality as its principle. And the principle of equality is transformed by the distribution of community shares as defined by a quandary: when is there and when is there not equality in things between who and who else? What are these things and who are these whos? How does equality come to consist of equality and inequality? This is the quandary proper to politics by which politics becomes a quandary of philosophy, an object of philosophy (Ranciere, 1998: ix).

In his discussion on the relation between equality and politics, Rancière presents politics as the encounter of two opposed logics; that of equality and of *arkhê*. In another fundamental distinction he makes, Rancière defines politics and the police corresponding the logic of equality and *arkhê*, respectively. With his distinction between the police and politics, Rancière

challenges the existing conceptions of politics by claiming that there is a misconception or misnaming in what they mean by politics. Instead of defining politics, they talk about its total opposite. As Rancière (1998: 28) states,

Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name. I propose to call it *the police*.

The police counts the parts of the social body, assign them names, proper places and tasks, and distributes those parts into their defined places. It decides the distribution of the sensible and the partition of the perceptible. That is to say, it is the police that decides what can be seen, said, heard and done. It makes the distinction between the speech and noise. The police order, as Rancière asserts, employs a specific logic of *arkhê* to count, classify, and distribute communal parts. In doing this, its legitimacy is based on two claims. Firstly, it claims that the order it constructs is the natural order of things and bodies. The police order defines spatial, functional and hierarchical differences among the parts of the social body. Then, it naturalizes these differences. It establishes ‘the normal’ and ‘the ordinary’. In a sense, it draws boundaries around the places and bodies. Secondly, the police claims that there is no remainder or void in its order. There is no miscount in its counting. Similar to Honig’s virtue theories, the police denies the existence of the remainder. There is no part who has no part is what the police claims. The police logic conceives society, as “a totality comprised of groups performing

specific functions and occupying determined spaces” (Panagia, 2000: 124). The problem is that the police first defines the parts of the social body and then count them as a part. In so doing, it also defines some communal parts as invisible. It does not accept their speeches as intelligible and as expressions of just and unjust, but as mere voices of pain and pleasure. By this way, it deprives them of being political and even being human. Then, it declares that nothing remains to be taken into (ac)count other than the parts it counts. The police, to use Rancière's notion, denies the existence of the fundamental wrong on which its order is based.

Another characteristic of the police is that the logic that operated in the police, that is the logic of *arkhê*. It is this logic that claims to provide the proper principle of politics and political order without creating any void. For Rancière, the search for a proper principle of politics – *the arkhê*– has been the defining part of the project of political philosophy from Plato to Habermas and Rawls. This search, however, for Rancière, comes up with the denial of the wrong they made. (Arsenjuk, 2007)

For Rancière, every police order is based on 'a fundamental wrong', 'a miscount' of the parts of the social and on the denial of the existence of 'the part of those who have no part'. It is important to differentiate ‘the part of those who have no part’ from ‘the parts of a society’ which is excluded, marginalized or disadvantageous but counted as a part. In Rancière's conception, the politics is not related with those groups and their negotiation

and reform demands within the existing police regime. The parts who have no part are those groups of people which have not given a name, a place, and a role in the social setting. Within the given configuration of the sensible, they could not be seen and heard. They simply do not exist from within the logic of the police. But the problem is not the fact that they do not exist but the police denies their existence. This miscount and the denial of its existence by the logic of *arkhe* or the police is what Rancière calls the fundamental wrong.

In order to clarify his use of the notion of the police, Rancière underlines its difference from ‘state apparatus’. The way Rancière discusses this difference would be informative and important for one of the dimensions of the critique I develop in the following chapters. Rancière states that the notion of state apparatus, as a result of the state-society opposition it presupposes, gives the state an exclusive role in creating the police order. “The distribution of places and roles that defines a police regime”, Rancière (1998: 29) argues, “stems as much from the assumed *spontaneity* of social relations as from the rigidity of state functions.”<sup>14</sup> Rancière challenges a view of politics that accounts a single site of oppression to a view that recognizes multiple sites of oppression.

Giving the characteristics of the police, Rancière places his conceptions of politics diametrically opposite to the police. As he (Rancière, 1998: 29-30) puts,

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<sup>14</sup> emphasis is mine.

I now propose to reserve the term politics for an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing: whatever breaks with the tangible configuration whereby parties and parts or lack of them are defined by a presupposition that, by definition, has no place in that configuration – that of the part of those who have no part... Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place's destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was once heard as noise.

Politics is a disagreement, a dispute, a polemical interruption to the existing definition of the community, of the common. Politics is neither a struggle between different groups with different interests in the society, nor it is a public deliberation about the common good. It opens, in the first place, a discussion on the very definition of the common. The permanent openness is related with the definition of the people, the demos, the common, which should constantly reconfigured and reformulated. For Rancière, when we start thinking democracy with a given definition of the people, with an idea of a constant body of demos and of its parts and then define democracy as the interactions between these already-defined parts, then what we really talk about is a kind of none-political democracy, which entails a contradiction in terms in the first place.

Politics occurs when equality is presupposed and expressed “by those who have not previously been treated as equal” (May, 2007b: 133-134) and who have not previously been counted as a part by the police order. It is this presupposition of equality by those who have no part that contradicts politics

with the police. Politics becomes the presentation of a fundamental wrong through the expression of a radical claim of equality.

Politics is an-archival and in this sense, as May (2008:59) underlines, it is “an act of enunciation and verification of equality that undermines any kind of hierarchy” no matter they are established in the state institutions, in the socio-economic domain, or in culture. The encounter of these two heterogeneous logics, that of hierarchical structures and of anarchic interruption of equality amounts to politicization in Rancière.

Politics challenges two above-mentioned claims of the police order. Against the naturalness of the order, politics reveals the contingency of it. And, against the denial of the existence of wrong, it shows the miscount and also the responsibility of the police in this miscount. The foundation of politics, Rancière (1998) argues, is the absence of any foundation. “There is simply politics because no social order is based on nature, no divine law regulates human society.”

Politics is not a sphere differentiated with its own actors, spaces and issues. It is a process of manifestation of the supplement, and the performance of equality. It is a process by which the political subject comes into existence. Hence, for Rancière, politics is not about identification but subjectivization. There is no political subject prior to the political act. Political activity itself

creates the political subject. (Rancière, 1992; Rancière, 1998, Read, 2007; May, 2007a)

In Rancière's view, there is no essentially political goal, issue or subject. On the contrary, Rancière suggests, politics should be understood with reference to a form of relation proper to it. As he states, politics is related with a particular form of relation, instead of a subject proper to politics. "If there is something proper to politics, it consists entirely in this relationship which is not a relationship between subjects, but one between two contradictory terms through which a subject is defined" (Ranciere, 2001). Thus, instead of being a relation between political subjects, politics becomes a mode of subjectification. Politics as subjectification, for Rancière, means that those who have no part become political subjects via their opposition to the police order.

"[N]othing is political in itself. But anything may become political if it gives rise to a meeting of these two logics" (Ranciere,1998: 32). Politics and what is political therefore occur as a 'dis-agreement' with the police order. Any subject or act, which enters into a paradoxical and polemical relation with the police order that disturbs the existing order of things, distribution of the sensible and the normal in order to manifest the fundamental wrong done against itself, becomes political. For Rancière, in other words, there is no political subject or political act that is a priori to this paradoxical relation.

Since there is no subject, place, or issue that is by definition and essentially political, everything, everyone and everywhere can become political, can be politicized. The only condition of being political is the encounter of two heterogeneous logics. Here Rancière reemphasizes the polemical quality of politics and puts dissensus/disagreement at the hearth of politics. Yet, this does not mean that ‘everything is political’. Rancière, too, underlines the problematic logic behind such an argument. He (Rancière, 1998: 32) argues,

if everything is political, then nothing is. So while it is important to show, as Michel Foucault has done magnificently, that the police order extends well beyond its specialized institutions and techniques, it is equally important to say nothing is political in itself merely because power relationships are at work in it. For a thing to be political, it must give rise to a meeting of police logic and egalitarian logic that is never set up in advance.

This idea, particularly from the main problematic of the dissertation, enables us to develop the following vision sensible to multiple instances of inequality and domination in a society. The police regime requires us to evaluate social phenomena in terms of the demarcated spheres such as the social, cultural, political, traditional, or customary. Consequently, certain actors, events and issues become political in itself just because the police regime defines them as such. Consequently, whatever those political actors do, or say, it becomes a political act or a political speech. Therefore, certain hierarchies, practices of dominations and inequalities are accepted as political matters, whereas some others become essentially none-political. They are accepted as related with a kind of socio-cultural spontaneity. Hence, instead of



a political intervention, the very same spontaneity would solve those problems, if they were accepted as a problem in the first place. Therefore, politicization of such issues or actors disturbs the police regime. However, for Rancière, what makes something political is the encounter of the police logic and the egalitarian logic. From his vision of politics, it would be possible to evaluate any kind of relation, decision or institution as political.

As it is discussed above, in Rancière's political thought, the origin of democracy is the beginning of democracy. As Žižek (in Rancière, 2004a: 70) underlines, in Rancière, democracy and politics becomes synonymous. Both emerged out of the unsettling claim of the demos to take part in ruling by staging its equality to the privileged parts of the society through identifying itself with the whole. Although his ideas of politics, as we discussed already, inform his ideas on democracy, it is worth to dwell upon the question of what kind of an idea of democracy Rancière's conception of politics would entail.

For Rancière's understating of democracy, there is not much to say in addition to his conception of politics. Since, for him, democracy and politics are in a sense the two sides of the same coin. He (Rancière, 1998: 101) states, "democracy is not a regime or a social way of life. It is the institution of politics itself, the system of forms of subjectification through which any order of distribution of bodies into functions corresponding to their 'nature' and places corresponding to their functions is undermined, thrown back on its contingency." In a sense, democracy is not possible in any police order.

It is important to understand that, in Rancière, the police can be efficient, productive and positive, instead of violent and destructive. However, this does not effect the fact that it is essentially based on a fundamental wrong for certain parts of the society by not counting them, by making them invisible and inaudible. Politics, at this point, emerges as the manifestation of this wrong moving from the principle of equality, and as the activity to undo the police order. It is a claim and struggle to be seen and be heard. Then, it seems possible to argue that, from Rancière's understanding of politics, it does not really matter whether the police order is the one of totalitarianism, liberal formal democracy or neo-liberal markets.

For Rancière, democracy, as Aamir Mufti (2003) underlines, is the regime of politics, rather than one of its possible forms of manifestation.

Democracy is not a political regime, in the sense of a constitutional form; nor is it a form of life (as we learn through Tocquevilian sociology) or a culture of pluralism and tolerance. Democracy is, properly speaking, the symbolic institution of the political in the form of the power of those who are not entitled to exercise power – a rupture in the order of legitimacy and domination. Democracy is the paradoxical power of those who do not count: the count of ‘the unaccounted for (Panagia: 2000: 124).<sup>15</sup>

Todd May (2007a, 2008) rightly emphasizes one important aspect of Rancière’s idea of democracy. Democracy is a process of politicization and

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<sup>15</sup> This kind of definition underlines a very different dimension of democracy...instead of entitlements, democracy is the government of those who were not entitled to govern...this comes from the origin of democracy and becomes the constitutive element, the essence of democracy. (Blechman, Chari, Hasan, 2005: 288)

political subjectivization. It is an act of disagreement and dissensus. It is a process of the verification of a radical equality. Such an understanding should be differentiated from the idea of democracy based on entitlements and rights received from a constitutional order. For May, as a result of such an idea of democracy, Rancière's notion of equality is always an active equality.

The political and democracy has to be thought together, since any separation between these two would lead us to a meaninglessness in thinking them one by one. In other words, thinking democracy means thinking the political and similarly the political can only be thought within the framework of democracy. That is to say, all political regimes other than democracy are the conditions where the political is ceased to exist. Democracy, on the other hand, should be defined as the political regime *par excellence*. (Ranciere, 1994: 173)

### **2.3 The Closure of the Political**

With their respective notions of 'remainder' and 'the part of those who have no part', Honig and Rancière maintain that any political and moral order, any settlement, established rules and institutions engender injustice, exclusion and inequality. Such a perspective resists, foremost, to a definition of democracy as a constitutional order, a form of government or a political regime with a set of institutions and procedures which can settle and consolidate themselves on the basis of a rejection either the existence of excluded and oppressed parts, or the fact that they engender those remainders. This is the main reason behind both Honig's and Rancière's insistence on the idea that contestation, disagreement and permanent openness are the constitutive moments of

democracy. Especially for Rancière democracy and politics emerged as the disruptive act of those who are not visible and audible.

Honig and Rancière, in their conceptions of politics and democracy give priority to the moments of contestation, dissonance, resistance, openness, difference, and disagreement. Yet, both authors acknowledge that these moments are bound up with their opposites. Stability, closure, consolidation, order, and identity are equally irreducible in an idea of democracy. Indeed democracy and politics are caught in between these opposite tendencies. Their tension is the very enabling paradox for democracy and politics. This is why for both Honig and Rancière, democracy is constitutionally paradoxical.<sup>16</sup> It should be underlined, at this point, that the irreducibility of both dimensions does not entail a kind of equilibrium between them for a healthy democracy. If we recall Rancière's discussion, democracy is the only political regime, which makes radical contingency, an-archy – against any hierarchy – egalitarianism and permanent openness to questioning as its main features. It is the moment where politics encounters with police as a polemical intervention of radical equality.

As it is claimed during the French Revolution, democracy would be best if insurgency could be institutionalized. It seems this is a good way of

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<sup>16</sup> Acknowledging the inherently paradoxical nature of democracy is not limited with Honig's and Rancière's writings. For Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001), democracy is in between rule and the suspension of rule; in Claude Lefort's (1989) thoughts on the subject, democracy is characterized as trapped in between the permanent emptiness of the place of power and the permanent attempts of occupying it;

putting the paradox of democracy. There is the impossibility of permanent revolution, on the one hand and the “alienating effects of institutional mediations and legal, formal mechanisms of will formation and decision-making” to the radical political impulse of democracy, on the other. (Kalyvas, 2008: 6) Acknowledging this paradox requires to develop a conception of democracy more than as a political regime and a constitutional order defined by specific set of institutions and procedures. As Sheldon Wolin (1996) writes, “democracy needs to be re-conceived as something other than a form of government. Democracy is a political moment...a rebellious moment that may assume revolutionary, destructive proportions.”

Having this constitutive paradoxical character of democracy in mind, the closure of the political basically refers to the elimination of contestation, resistance and unpredictability from politics. As it is discussed above, this is what the police order and virtue theories try to achieve. Many different forms of the closure of the political can be pointed out in line with this basic meaning. One form would be limiting democratic politics within what Kalyvas (2008: 6) defines as normal, ordinary or institutionalized politics, which is “monopolized by political elites, entrenched interest groups, bureaucratic parties, rigid institutionalized procedures, the principle of representation, and parliamentary electoral processes.” Such a perspective ignores “the significance of unpredictable and discontinuous deed that defy the established order, challenge the scope and content of institutionalized politics, and transgress the limits of the possible and the accepted” (Kalyvas,

2008: 292). One major consequence is the inability to assess the alienating and depoliticizing effects of institutionalization to the political dimension of democracy.

Democracy requires permanent openness to critical reflection and questioning. Closure of the political in this sense means putting limits to critical reflection. Accepting certain relations, issues, rules or identities as self-evident, unquestionable, or necessary for order and stability. In other words, declaring them as non-political, which is a way to make them immune from critical reflection for the sake of consolidation and continuity of certain inequalities.

Another form of the closure of the political is related to the notion of the people in terms of its identity, definition and boundaries. When the people is accepted as given and it is put outside the political contestation, it won't be able to expose the places, persons and topics for which the political is closed. As it is mentioned above, Rancière argues that the people as the subject of democracy is itself permanently contentious. As Alan Keenan (2003) writes, democracy "at odds with itself, torn between the closure necessary for the people's identity and rule, and the openness of contestations and revisability". Politics is neither related with relations between particular groups, identities or interests in the society, nor with a discussion on the common good. It is related about the question of the common in the first place. To put it differently, the closure of the political is accepting the boundaries of the

people, the common, or of particular identities as certain. On the contrary, democracy is a matter of ongoing questioning under conditions of ultimate uncertainty; its basic virtue is openness. Rancière and Honig, as Näsström (2007:627) puts, “call for a politics of contestation, stressing that the search for consent undermines the contingent, productive and above all political nature of the people.”

Another way of thinking the closure of the political would be in the form of closing the political space to certain groups, defining certain spaces as non-political. By this way, certain inequalities in those places, within those identities or communities are again kept away from political contestation, disruption and foremost from the polemical interruption of radical equality. The other side of the same form of the closure of the political is limiting or defining politics with specific institutions, actors and spheres, such as defining politics with reference to state, political parties, elections and certain other institutions and procedures. Any understanding of democracy based on such a conception of politics ignores various different experiences of inequality, oppression and domination as being social, cultural or moral. Reducing politics either to state activity, or to relations one side of which is always the state is another way of reduction and closing politics. Therefore, what is important is the proliferation of sites of politics. The conception of politics I defend here via Rancière and Honig departs from those conceptions of politics, which try to reduce and limit politics to “a particular ensemble of

institutions and normalized practices that both define its conditions and create a perimeter or enclosure for its action and affectivity” (Arditi, 1994:18)

The conceptions of politics and democracy that I try to frame here undermine the perspectives, which try to understand political life through the lens of certain binary oppositions. Such perspectives, I would argue, are unable to register multiple and different experiences of inequality, hierarchies, relations and practices of domination and oppression. Multiple instances of the closure of the political cannot be understood as a problem of democracy. To put it differently, they not only create blind spots for the closure of the political but also they close the politics for various relations.



## CHAPTER III

### NİYAZI BERKES: SECULARISM, MODERNITY AND DEMOCRACY

“Political philosophy constitutes a form of seeing political phenomena and that the way in which the phenomena will be visualized depends in large measure on where the viewer stands.” (Wolin, 2006:17)

“Each mode of consideration is a sort of searching light elucidating some of the facts and retreating the remained into an omitted background.” (Wolin, 2006: 21)

In terms of understanding the relationship between the political and democracy, the question of secularism appears to be of great importance. Secularism in modernity has double-meaning which is not easily reconcilable. Secularism has become both a constitutive of modernity and also a significant ruling project of regulating and administrating the religion. (Keyman, 2007: 2) It is for this reason, focusing on secularism we may understand the relationship between the political and modernity, in general and as well as in Turkey. Niyazi Berkes’s analysis of secularism in Turkey constitutes the

subject of this chapter. Berkes, as one of the most prominent scholars of social history of Turkey, provides a comprehensive perspective of Turkish modernization beginning from 1700s. Throughout his writings, the main urge is to explain the dynamics, turning points, achievements, and failures of Turkish modernization by putting the development of secularization at the center of the analysis.

In his analysis, he tries to show the linkages between historical events and the reasons and consequences of these events by relating them with the history of Turkish modernization at large. In so doing, these events, transformations and changes of the last 200 years of the Ottoman-Turkish society are evaluated as parts of the same story, i.e. modernization. Berkes's main aim is to draw a road map of Turkish modernization and the development of secularization since 1700s. Indeed in his account, modernization and secularization indicate the same process.

In this chapter, after presenting a short biography of Berkes and an outline of his analysis of Turkish modernization and the development of secularism in Turkey, I critically evaluate his perspective in order to reveal the limitations of his narration of modernization in understanding the relation between secularism and democracy. In so doing, I focus on his teleological understanding of history and his holistic conception of modernity, on reductionism in secular/anti-secular duality, on Berkes's conception of politics and finally on the priority of secularism in Berkes, all of which

contribute to the weakness of Berkes's account in understanding problems of democracy. Additionally, I discuss the relationship between secularism, plurality and politics to show the conditional relation of secularism with democratic polity on the contrary to Berkes's essentialist relation.

To put it in a different way, in his analysis, Berkes directs us at a narrative of Turkish modernization and from this narration, he explains us the failures and achievements, critical events and persons, friends and foes of innovations, the source of force and resistance to modernization in Turkish case. However, I would argue, the limitation is related with the narration itself. Any narration, depending on the point of view of the narrator, provides a lens to see through, but it is also that lens prevents us from seeing some other dimensions. As I try to maintain with the theoretical discussion in the first chapter, for an analysis of democracy, that lens should be one of the political. The blind spots of Berkes's perspective are what I problematize. In line with the main objective of the dissertation, the blindness that I am searching for is the one, which puts the question of democracy and the political out of our sight.

### **3.1 Niyazi Berkes: A Short Biography**

Niyazi Berkes was born in Nicosia, Cyprus in 1908. For his education, he went to Istanbul and graduated from Istanbul Lycée for Boys and after high

school, he entered to the Law Faculty of Istanbul University. During his study at the Law School, he was disappointed from the existing anti-intellectual environment and from the content of the study, which, for Berkes, did not provide the necessary knowledge for understanding the postwar world and the newly established Turkish Republic. Although philosophy department was far from providing what Berkes expected, he transferred there where at least independent study was much more possible. In 1931, he graduated from Istanbul University with a bachelor degree in philosophy (see Feroz Ahmad, 1998 and Kurtuluş Kayalı, 2000 for a detailed biography).

After failing to find a position in a university, he started to work at the People's House in Ankara to organize the library in order to make it ready for the Tenth Anniversary of the Republic. For Berkes, moving to Ankara came up with important opportunities. In Ankara, he could be more close to the Kemalist reformers to understand the newly established Turkish Republic by freeing himself from Istanbul elites, who were ignorant to all these new developments and formations. In line with his interest on change, he conducted a study in a village near Ankara in 1930s. He was interested in understanding the attitudes and thoughts of villagers about change. As a result of this study, he challenged his own prejudice about the villagers that they were against any change.

After his job at the People's House, he continued his career at a Turkish-American experimental high school. This high school was established

on the principles of John Dewey. Deweyian principles about the relationship between education and social change was in the test. Dewey sent Dr. Beryl Parker to establish and run the school together with Berkes. This relation opened an important door for Berkes in his career. Although the experiment failed and both Berkes and Parker resigned their posts in this project, the relation they built and the discussions they made during this process left a very good impression on Beryl about Berkes and his thoughts. Particularly, Berkes's insistence on the necessity of understanding the sociological context of any society before introducing an educational system persuaded Beryl in mentioning about Berkes at the University of Chicago. As a result, Berkes was offered a fellowship from the Department of Sociology.

After his years in Ankara, he turned back to Istanbul University and found a place as a lecturer at the Sociology Department. After working there for a while, he accepted the offer from the University of Chicago and went there in 1935. During his years at the University of Chicago until 1939, his awareness on the importance of statistical and historical outlook in studying sociology increased. Given the fact that he spent his years in Chicago at a department where Talcott Parsons was also a member, it seems possible to argue that those years were very influential on Berkes's later works and his sociological perspective in general.

After his return to Turkey, he found a job at the Faculty of Language, History and Geography, Department of Philosophy in Ankara. At that time

there was an increase in the authoritarian measures of the regime and in the pan-Turkist movements as one of the consequences of World War II. As a reaction to this rise in the pro-fascist views and attitudes, certain scholars, journalists and intellectuals tried to maintain their critical position. Berkes published various articles in journals and daily papers like *Yurt ve Dunya*, *Vatan* and *Tan*, and also published two books between 1940-1946. Although he was not a Marxist, he was associated with those scholars who were reactionary to the existing regime and its authoritarian measures. With a claim of making a communist propaganda with their writings and lectures, Niyazi Berkes, Pertev Naili Boratav, Behica Boran and Adnan Cemgil found themselves in the middle of an anti-communist campaign led by the right-wing students. After a battle against the suspensions, prosecutions and trials, staying at the University become impossible for them, though they won the legal battle. As a result, Berkes left Turkey and went to Canada as a visiting scholar at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University in 1952 and later appointed as an associate professor in 1956.

Feroz Ahmad (1998) underlines an important fact about Berkes which would explain the isolation he experienced in his life. Berkes did not join any political group, even the Republican People's Party, though he support the Kemalist reforms and the new Turkish Republic wholeheartedly. When we pay attention to the importance of the patronage maintained through the Party membership in finding positions anywhere including universities, it would be easy to understand the repercussions of this choice of Berkes to his career.

One of them, for Ahmad (1998), was the anti-communist campaign against him.

While he was in McGill, besides other studies, he made translations of Ziya Gokalp's works and collected them in a book, which was the first appearance of Gokalp's works in the English-speaking world. Until the 1960 military intervention, Berkes himself and his writings had faced with an unofficial ban in Turkey. After 1960, his writings started to appear, yet he was not allowed to return to Turkey. After his retirement, he moved to England and lived there until his death in 1988. Among his works, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* is accepted as his *magnum opus*, appeared in 1964. His other writings are included *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization* (1959), *İkiyuz yıldır Neden Bocalıyoruz?* (1964), *Batıcılık, Ulusçuluk ve Toplumsal Devrimler* (1965), *İslamcılık, Ulusçuluk, Sosyalizm* (1969), and *Türk Düşününde Batı Sorunu* (1973).

### **3.2 Secularization in Turkey**

In the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Ottomans recognized that there had been important changes and transformations in the West having important repercussions for the Ottomans. The existing system started to fail within the context of a changing world. Foremost, the increasing number of military loses brought about the need for reforms. Consequently, the military organization was

placed at the center of the first reform attempts. The main characteristic of this early period, for Berkes (1964), was that the attempts aimed to strengthen the existing institutions and structure and to make them work efficiently again. In other words, they were attempts to revitalize the traditional order or the medieval system. The main reason behind such an attitude, Berkes (1964: 24) claims, was Ottomans' belief on the superiority of their system and organization. Reforms, which aimed to import and implement the emerging Western institutions and innovations, could be possible when this trust was broken.

Berkes (1964: 51-54) notes that the Tulip Era (1718-1730) can be characterized with a dominant renaissance-like secular trend. Berkes evaluates all attempts of secularization as trapped in between the internal anti-reformist reactions, generally in the form of religious movements, and the international power struggles. The secular trend and the reform attempts in the Tulip Era, for instance, were under the negative influence of the power struggle between Russia and France. Since both states tried to find themselves a place in the Balkans, there was an increasing anti-Westernist sensibility in the Ottoman society. And this sensibility was reflected upon reforms. The reformists and defenders of the modern secular thought and science were accused of trying to harm the Ottoman Empire, because of their effort to adapt the Western methods.



For Berkes, the defining characteristics of the reformists during the Tulip Era was their tendency to appreciate the new order on the basis of secular and rational principles without understanding the conditions and background which made the birth of this new Western order possible. Such a perspective came up with the reform attempts that tried to establish all these new methods and institutions without considering the possible drawbacks arising from the application of these new methods to the traditional order of the Ottoman Empire. The problem was that while preserving the traditional system, it was not possible to upgrade the system with the new, rational and secular methods and organizing principles. (Berkes, 1964:57) According to Berkes (1964: 58), “the lesson to be learned from the first ordeal of the reform experiment was that the efficient use of new methods and techniques could not be assured so long as the traditional institutions and ideas prevailed.” Thus came in that period the attempt to initiate the second stage in the reform movement. This occurred under the leadership of Sadrazam Halil Hamid, and aimed at transforming traditional institutions themselves. A plan for a new army, reforms in the *Timar* system and the *Yeniçeri* organizations were among these much deeper reforms.

It should also be argued that the importance of this first stage of reforms for Berkes’ analysis is that this was also the initial stage for the emergence of the basic antagonistic duality, which shaped the history of modernization, between the secular and progressive forces, on the one hand, and regressive, anti-secular and conservative forces, on the other. No matter

their social origins or the differences among them, the groups who were loosing their traditional status came together under the aim of securing the status quo. For Berkes, this urge was the defining feature of the reaction against innovations and reforms. He claims that a fundamental difference between the conservatists and reformists should be understood in order not only to understand the reasons behind the failure of reform attempts but also to understand the distinctive characteristics of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization history. As Berkes (1964: 63) puts; “[conservatists] found support in the wider social bases of the society, whereas the reformists represent no group or class interest, not even their own.” And consequently; “one reason for failure in the reform concept was the fact that reformism was initiated by the rulers and ruling class rather than by a new class constituting a pressure group against the ruling principles.”

The concept of reform in Selim III’s time (1789-1807) was developed under the influence of this idea of the necessity of a more comprehensive reform about the traditional system. It was also understood that the reform should be expanded to include economy, instead of concentrating on only military organization. As Berkes notes, particularly making a comprehensive reform in the military organization by abolishing traditional units and institutions was much more difficult and complicated than it was expected. The main reason was that the traditional military system was strictly connected with all other parts of the whole system. Any change for instance in the military inevitably had radical repercussions on the economy based on

*Timar* system. It seems by emphasizing this interrelation, Berkes tries to show the reasons behind the emergence of reactions against any simple change which disturbed many different interests groups.

To put it simply, this era was marked by the idea of the need to establish a modern economy with an effective state apparatus, the strength of which should be based on a new army. However, Berkes notes, the advancement in the idea of reform was not followed by the application of this new concept of reform, particularly because of the lack of any strong source capable to implement and enforce them. Berkes (1964: 81) adds, “but one thing seems to have been certain: the trend which had started from the beginning of the eighteenth century seemed to have reached a turning point...The ideas as to what had to be done seemed to have reached a stage of clarity, if not maturity.”

Following the reign of Mahmud II (1808-1839), Berkes notes, the reform efforts entered into a radically different path with a ‘dramatically increased standard’. Berkes (1964:90) sums the context of these reforms under four topics. Yeniceris’ attempt to restore their political power; corruption in the *Timar* system and as its consequence, the increasing independence of Derebeys from the central rule; emergence of the national-separatist movements; the changing nature of the international power struggle as a result of wars and the Industrial Revolution. “The most significant aspect of the innovations initiated by Mahmud II was the emergence of the idea of an

Ottoman state, composed of peoples of diverse nationalities and religions, based on secular principles of sovereignty as contrasted with the medieval concept of an Islamic empire.

For Berkes (1964: 92) the above mentioned change in the idea of reform was the “the real beginning of modernization and secularization” in the Ottoman-Turkish history. The main characteristics of this period were that Mahmud II challenged the traditional institutions; he put forward the principles of the government by law and equality before the law, and tried to establish his reign on these ideas.

The secularization in question during Mahmud II’s time was related with his new concept of justice parallel with the idea of legal equality. Indeed, secularization in this sense materialized in terms of the abolition of the millet system based on the recognition of the religious differences. On the contrary to the millet system, new justice conception was devised to be blind to such differences and based on an equal and neutral treatment to all religions. Berkes (1964: 95) underlines that the necessity of a new conception of society based on a secular public law was a consequence of the emergence of the question of nationalities. Mahmud II’s efforts of expanding reforms to a wider spectrum, his ideas of justice and equality, and the legal reforms which basically tried to separate worldly affairs from religious ones prepared the necessary context for expansion in the conception of reform during the Tanzimat.

Berkes defines 1840-70 period with an increasing penetration of the European economy to the Ottoman society. As Berkes (1964: 140) notes, “the persons, the methods, and the institutions of modern economy began to enter in and became established.” European powers used the conditions of the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant communities as a pretext to maintain the necessary conditions for their economic interests. Under the impact of European diplomacy in the reform policies, the Tanzimat Charter was issued. Berkes states it is “the earliest constitutional document in any Islamic country” which “meant a series of acts that would give a new order to the organization of the state.” However, it did not come up with a substantial expansion in Mahmud II’s reforms.

Basically the Charter accepted certain rights as fundamentals of the legal system and these rights were supposed to be granted for every Ottoman subject equally. Berkes gives an example from a Tanzimat statesman to illustrate the secularization understanding of the period. According to the statesman, “the Ottoman state could be secularized only when the millets became religious congregations and each Ottoman subject was individually responsible and equal before the laws.” (Berkes, 1964: 154)

The Tanzimat secularism in the legal field was materialized, as Berkes notes, with the law codification attempts. The traditional judicial system had increasingly become inefficient as a result of the political changes and the

penetration of modern economy. By law codification, a non-formal and basically moral-religious system tried to be replaced with a formal one particularly via “putting laws into written form with some degree of systematization in form and substance” (Berkes, 1964: 160). For Berkes (1964: 163), law codification was “an unmistakable sign of secularization” and he defines it as “the first attempt to differentiate between law and religion and to legislate after deliberation and selection from among the available sources and upon certain rational or secular criteria”. With the codification efforts and the establishment of a public secular law, secularization was achieved to a certain extent in the legal system. Especially these attempts were implemented in the commercial law. Yet, in the penal code still there were important spaces for the Şeriat provisions. This duality in the legal system was also one of the main characteristics of the Tanzimat period. So far, the development of secularism in the Ottoman system appeared as the outcome of the inevitable changes in the international power politics which particularly seen in the problem of the millet system and additionally it went on a form of bargain with traditional institutions based on religion.

The duality of the Tanzimat period was also in question in the educational system. The religious and secular sources again had their own territories. Whereas higher learning had been secularized particularly with the motive of learning and adopting scientific and technological innovations developed in the West, the primary education was kept in the form of a religious education. One implication of this duality was an increase in the gap

between the educated secular minds of a small number of people and the uneducated masses. Berkes (1964: 170) states this problem in the following way: “Two mentalities arose and began to diverge from one another. They became not only increasingly estranged but also mutually hostile. The product of one educational path was incapable of understanding those of the other.”

In addition to this duality, Berkes argues, the sociological dimension of the western civilization could not be understood in the Tanzimat period. It was assumed that the societal differences do not have any effect on the implementation of the ideas and institutions of the western civilization. Tanzimat statesmen could not understand the real subject of change and reforms. In Europe, Berkes argues, it was the society itself. For Berkes (2002: 195-197), such an understanding could only be gained when the Ottoman ideology was left. It is because of the fact that the success of the European economy was based on the emergence of ‘nation as the political unit, and the establishment of the national economies. The Tanzimat reformers were far from understanding the real problem and put the Ottomans under the influence of the European powers as its result. This is why Tanzimat reforms ended up with economic, political and cultural crisis.

Another innovation during the Tanzimat period was about language, literature and journalism. The importance of these innovations, Berkes notes, was being the source of the cultivation and dissemination of liberal and nationalist ideas. Together with technical translations, many works of

European thinkers, especially those of French intellectuals were translated. Tanzimat was not clear about the social substratum as the source of Ottoman sovereignty. The spread of liberal and nationalist ideas also contributed to the search for a solution to this problem. Berkes (2002: 201) states, “the demand for constitutional reform came when the desire to base the institution of sovereignty upon a concrete social foundation arouse.”

The constitutional movements came into existence as a result of the crises, which was the product of Tanzimat. Berkes states that the early ideas on constitutionalism were religious, anti-Western and anti-Tanzimat. All the economic and social problems were thought as the results of Tanzimat’s western oriented reforms and the influence of the European power. Berkes underlines that the success and well-being of non-Muslim millets turned out to be examples for supporting the idea that the Ottoman sovereignty should be based on the Turks and the state should be an Islamic state to ensure the unity necessary for the sovereignty.

The first constitutional experiment (1876-1878) was marked by “a complicated battle” over the compatibility of a constitutional regime and the Şeriat; the faith of the Ottoman rulers; the questions of abolition or restoration of Islamic forms of government. Islamism, liberalism and nationalism were among the doctrines which framed the discussions. The failures of the Tanzimat era prepared the necessary condition for the rise of Islamism and the



Ottoman ideology. As a result, first constitutional discussions concluded with the Hamidian regime which ended all the reform attempts.

During the Meşrutiyet, Berkes underlines, three main doctrines were still on the stage; the Westernists and the Islamists as the two opposite polar and in between them the Turkists. Berkes argues that liberals did not make any further contribution to the Tanzimat secularism. On the one hand, liberals began to be aware of the problems arising from the absence of a concrete social substratum for a new order. On the other hand, they thought the solution could only be possible with understanding and cultivating the essence of the Western civilization, i.e. individualism, private ownership and freedom from authority of the state and of the religion. The only way for them to cultivate these principles in the society is education by which social transformation could be possible. However, for Berkes, this idea was nothing but ‘an intellectual utopia’ devoid of any social bases.

Berkes argues the Turkists were in the right path in making the social transformation and secularism possible. He maintains, “it was the Turkists who saw that it was the people, the Turkish people, who would be the fulcrum for a transformation into nationhood.” And this was the point where the Turkists gave a new outlook to Meşrutiyet Secularism. Berkes frequently underlines the absence of any social basis of reforms on the one hand, and the importance of the unit of nation behind the success of the European state. Discovery of ‘the Turkish people’ as the fulcrum of nationhood, then, turned

out to be the key for modernization and secularization in Turkey. Freeing Turkish society from being *ummet* and transforming them to nation amounts to opening the way to secularism and to a new economy and technology.

The Turkists understood that the Ottoman state could not be reformed by restructuring it on a national or a secular basis. This is why the subject of reform should be the society. This was also the outlook which differentiated the Meşrutiyet secularism from the Tanzimat secularism. Under the influence of the Turkist view, Meşrutiyet secularism engendered important secular advancements in the field of education, law and economy. Berkes points out that for first time medrese and the primary education became a subject of secularization policy. Instead of abolishing the medrese institution or letting it under the control of Islamic tradition, it was tried to be reformed in such a way to include the teachings of modern science and thought. In the legal field, withdrawal of the Seyh-ul Islam from legislation, and in particular the development in the family law were the instances of the new perspective of secularism. Berkes also underlines many small changes in the everyday life with important repercussions on the development of secularism such as changes in the calendar and script.

In addition to law and education, Meşrutiyet secularism came with an idea of a national economy organized around the characteristic of the Turkish society. While Westernists thought the economic problems with reference to categories of capitalist economy, Islamists praised “the economic virtues of

the pious medieval trader or artisan and believed that the Modern Muslim would prosper industrially and commercially with the restoration of these virtues'. (Berkes, 2002: 424) The Turkists were also aware of the importance of a national economy, which would decrease the dependence of the Turkish economy on the European power.

It seems, from Berkes's perspective, Meşrutiyet secularism shifted the object of secularization from the state to the society, understood the role of the nation as the modern definition of collectivity, and to a certain extent tried to abolish the dual structure of the Tanzimat secularism by attempting to constrain Islam only with religious matters. Meşrutiyet secularism was important more than what it achieved. It also prepared the mindset and the circumstances for a nationalist struggle and for the Republic.

The last secularism movement appeared in the work of Berkes is the Kemalist secularism. Berkes underlines that it is radically different than the previous approaches of Tanzimat and Meşrutiyet. The difference particularly comes from "the introduction of a new principle of populism to replace the old notion of reforming the traditional basic institutions, the Islamic Ottoman State". Berkes (1964: 461) also states that "the Kemalist reconstruction, thus developed as nothing but automatic application of a new constitutional principle. This was what made it thoroughly secular as distinguished from all the movements of reform in the past."

The principle of populism as an expression of the idea of popular sovereignty was the founding principle of the Republic. Secularism, which was initiated by the abolition of the institution of the Caliphate (March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1924), was also a course to take for the sake of popular sovereignty. For Berkes, Kemalist secularism and its link with the idea of popular sovereignty should be evaluated by taking the Ottoman legacy into account. *Din-u-devlet*, as the legacy of the medieval Islam and the Ottoman polity, based on not the existence of two separate power holders; state and religion, rather on the conception of them as a whole. As a repercussion of this characteristic of the Ottoman-Turkish polity, the development during the Tanzimat and the Meşrutiyet period did not take place “in the direction of the severance of ties between two distinct spheres of life belonging to two distinct authorities and institutions. Rather it was one of bifurcation of a whole”. Consequently, for Berkes, any reform made in one sector immediately produced its own opposition in the other sector. Kemalist reforms consist of a radical change by founding the new order on the basis of popular sovereignty. Such a radical change could not let the religious institutions survive which always had important political implications. As Berkes (2002: 481) notes “the struggle was not over the question of separating the spiritual and temporal, but over the difference between democracy and theocracy.’ This is also the point where the difference between Kemalist secularism and the separatist-secularisms of Tanzimat and Meşrutiyet lies.

For Berkes (2002: 483), Kemalist secularism also consists of what he calls ‘a rationalist approach to religion’. From this perspective, the abolition of Caliphate and other religious institutions with important political implications also amount to “liberating Islam from its unreasonable traditional associates and preparing the ground for its emergence as a rational religion”. In other words, the Kemalist secularism brought not only the possibility of modernization of the state but also the possibility of an enlightenment of the Islam. For Berkes, this would solve the question of the place of Islam in a democratic polity. By this way, secularism is to maintain the necessary conditions not only for the principle of popular sovereignty but also to prevent the emergence of religious reactions and backwardness by taming the religion with reason.

In Berkes’s analysis, different periods with their different conceptions of reform and change were analyzed with their corresponding reflections on the history of secularism in Turkey. Beginning from the seventeenth century until the nineteenth century, the reform conception as a response to the pressures coming from the changing world was based on the idea of strengthening the traditional structure. As Berkes points out, modernization became the part of the reform efforts during the nineteenth century. However, an increasing awareness of the inadequacy of the traditional institutions developed together with the increasing hostility towards any innovation which had disturbed the existing value system based on religion. To put it differently, the history of modernization is also the history of crystallization and

polarization of forces of the modern and the traditional. Secularism efforts during the nineteenth century, for Berkes (1964), produced not two separated areas of the religious and the secular or, “a secular state with a religious organization outside it, but rather a series of divisions in the political, legal and educational institutions, each of which manifested a religious-secular duality. This characteristic of secularism in Turkey went on until the emergence of Turkish nationalism and the idea of the Turkish nation as the social base of the reforms. The new face of secularism was established by the Kemalist restructuring. The duality or the co-existence of the religious and the secular in previous reform movements was over by the introduction of the idea of popular sovereignty in Kemalist secularism. In other words, secularism as a radical change, rather than a form of bargain with religion could be possible when it was seen as *sin qua non* for the possibility of the principle of popular sovereignty. Berkes celebrates Kemalist restructuring because of the national character of its secularism. With this character, for him, secularism can be a part of democratization through acquiring a national character. In the discussions below, I try to show the problematic relation between secularism and nation building process, together with Berkes’s analysis in general.

### **3.3 Secularism and the Secularization Thesis**

As we discussed so far, Niyazi Berkes (1964) tries to explain the history of Turkish modernization as a process of secularization. Because of this exclusive and central importance of secularization as the meta-narrative of Turkish modernization, it would be very helpful to dwell upon the main arguments of the secularization thesis and the various meanings of the concept of secularization and secularism. By this way, not only Berkes's position can be understood clearly, but also we can reach an adequate theoretical position in order to expose the main limitations and blindspots of Berkes's narration of secularization in Turkish case.

The history of modernity, among other ways of defining it, is also the history of the displacement of religion from its unquestionable, central and, authoritative place. Since the Enlightenment in various different spheres of life religion lost its control. Epistemologically, science replaced its place as the source of knowledge. Rationality and bureaucracy turned out to be the new rules of the domain of government together with democratic consent, universal rights and freedom and positive law as the new sources of legitimacy. The decline of religion argument can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enlightenment. It further developed in the works of various thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, particularly those who tried to understand and explain the emergence of the modern society and the main characteristics of modernity at large. In the works of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel, secularization

appeared as a central tendency in the modern societies. Most notably, Weber (2004: 30) explains modernity with its emphasis on rationalization and defines the condition of modernity with his well-known phrase of ‘the disenchantment of the world’.

Even if we can trace back the key idea of the secularization thesis back to the Enlightenment and in the works of the classical sociologists, the secularization thesis became the outcome of the post-war sociology particularly in the works of Peter Berger, David Martin and Robert Bellah among others. The main idea of the secularization thesis is that there is a progressive decline of religion at both societal and individual level. Religion “in the modern world is likely to decline and become increasingly privatized, marginal and politically irrelevant.” (Casanova, 2001: 104) It is “a teleological process of modern social change” (Casanova, 2006: 17) through which the more societies become modern the more they become secular. As Asad (2003: 1) points out it is “a straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular”.

The secularization thesis is, indeed, a part of the theory of modernization. It “shares the linear-progressive viewpoint of modernization theory, and is really a sub-category of that theoretical approach.” (Keddie, 1997: 22) According to the secularization theory which have served “as the master model of sociological inquiry” (Hadden, 1987: 588), the general process of modernization consists of parallel developments of



bureaucratization, industrialization, rationalization, urbanization and secularization. These processes serve for the same telos, i.e. the modern society emancipated from all backwardness, superstition and irrationalities which are generally arising from religious dogma. Consequently, a possible conflict or contradiction is not in question within these sub-categories of modernization. Among these processes, democratization can also be accepted as an outcome of this linear developmental model. Albeit a relatively late and an advanced one, democratization is a sure and an inevitable stage of this modernization process. As an inevitable consequence of this theory, these two integral parts of this modernization paradigm, secularization and democratization, are two parallel processes which are in the service of each other. “In modernization theories, secularization and democratization have been considered mutually reinforcing processes” and “secularization is considered an essential component of democratization”. (Tehrani, 2003: 811) Before problematizing this essentialist relation between secularization and democracy, it would be instructive to point out major explanations of secularization and the idea of secularism.

As Karel Dobbelaere (1981: 29) rightly points out that secularization is a ‘multi-dimensional concept’. Among different dimensions of it, one important dimension seems to be common in different sociological theories of secularization. That is the conceptualization of secularization “as a process of differentiation, i.e. a process of growing independence of institutional spheres (such as politics, education, economy, and science), each developing its own

rationale, which implies the rejection of the overarching claim of religion.” (Dobbelaere , 1981: 14) Religion becomes just another institution besides others. This particular meaning of secularization, as Dobbelaere puts, appears in the works of Durkeim as differentiation, of Weber as disenchantment of the world, desacralization as a result of rationalization processes and more recently of Berger as objective secularization (Dobbelaere , 1981: 11). Berger refers secularization as “a process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols” (Cited in Keyman, 2007: 217). For him, secularization is rooted “in the economic area, specifically, in those sectors of the economy being formed by the capitalistic and industrial processes” (Dobbelaere , 1981: 17). Capitalist and industrial society necessitates the dominance of rational personnel with a high degree of scientific and technological training. For Berger, this capitalistic-industrial rationalization requires a corresponding rationalization at the legal and political level. Modern state, consequently, evolved in this direction with the development of bureaucracy. Berger argues that “secularization then passes from the economic to the political sphere in a near-inexorable process of ‘diffusion’” (Dobbelaere , 1981: 18). This dimension of secularization is what Berger calls the objective dimension. Objective secularization is related with the “institutional differentiation of the political from the religious, in which religion is removed from the authority and legitimacy of the state.” (Keyman, 2007: 218) The replacement of divine origins of legitimacy and justification of state authority and political institutions with secular and positive law can be counted as the main manifestations of objective secularization. In this form,

secularization is a “social-structural process”. Another dimension of secularization appears in Berger’s theory is the subjective dimension which is about the decline of religion in consciousness of individuals. That is to say, it is the result of subjective secularization that the significance of religious references in the lives of individuals disappears. As the result of objective secularization, religion is restricted to the private sphere or private lives of individuals. The regulatory role of religion in our social and political lives ceases to exist. Then, even at the private sphere religion loses its significance which is the subjective dimension of secularization. Objective secularization is supposed to be followed by the subjective secularization as the two levels on the progressive linear process of secularization at large.

Another important sociological discussion on secularization comes from Jose Casanova. He underlines the main argument of the secularization thesis, according to which “religion in the modern world is likely to decline and become increasingly privatized, marginal, and politically irrelevant” (Casanova, 2001: 1041). Yet similar to Berger, he also mentions different dimensions of secularization process by separating three propositions of secularization. For him, these three components of the thesis are: “1) secularization as a differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, 2) secularization as a decline of religious beliefs and practices, and 3) secularization as a marginalization of religion to a privatized sphere.” Casanova (2006) continuously claims that:

“...the core component of the theory of secularization was the conceptualization of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres – primarily the modern state, the capitalist market economy, and modern science – from religious sphere, and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere.”

He also mentions an expansion in the meaning of the term of secularization through the objective dimension to the subjective dimension to use Berger’s terms.

For further clarification of the concept of secularization, a more political discussion should be made. Or, in other words, a more direct link between secularization and the political is needed to be discussed. I propose that problematizing this link and re-describing the political dimension of secularism and secularization makes a re-negotiation of the idea of secularism possible for a democratic polity. I try to show that a particular function and a particular meaning of secularism and secularization should be prevailed in order to relate democracy and secularism with each other. Such an attempt also stands critical to the existing assumptions of the secularization thesis which suppose that there is an essential relation and correlation between secularization and democracy.

### **3.4 Secularism and Plurality**

In the following discussion on the relationship between democracy and secularization and secularism, I locate the concept of plurality at the center. It seems possible to argue that any such relation must explicate the interrelation between the political, secularism and plurality.

In his theory of secularization, Berger constructs the link between modernity and secularization with the notion of plurality. Among other characteristics, increasing plurality is an important aspect of modern societies. Plurality as a social fact became the main obstacle for a society to rely on one overarching or comprehensive conception of good life and regulate social life by based on a common belief, tradition or religion. “[P]luralism undermines stable belief. Under the pressure of the pluralizing forces of modernity ‘the sacred canopy’ becomes ‘the precarious vision’” (Woodhead, 2001: 2). Sociologically speaking, then, as one of the main characteristics of modern society, plurality turns out to be the reason behind the necessity of secularization.

The important consequence of an increasing plurality in modern societies is that it undermines the possibility of the existence of overarching sacred cosmos arising from a particular religion, tradition or from a conception of good life of a particular community. The co-existence of difference seems to be more apparent characteristic of modern societies with

their complex social institutionalization and high populations. The regulation of this co-existence of differences and plurality is no longer possible through the moral universe of one particular religious outlook which is not shared by all members of a modern society. It is a generally accepted fact that modern societies are plural and heterogeneous. The problem of co-existence of differences turned out to be a very important issue to deal with. Traditions and religions can no longer provide us the necessary principles without making violence to plurality and difference in some way or another. Indeed, the previous monopoly of religion and tradition in regulating our coexistence was also far from being non-violent to differences. Plurality is not an essentially modern phenomena. True, it increased and became more apparent in modern societies but it is also the characteristic of the human condition.

Charles Taylor (1998) constructs his analysis of secularism on the basis of plurality of religious views. He claims that an adequate understanding of the idea of secularism can be possible by explicating its origins. What kind of conditions in history of Europe did make Western secularism a necessary principle for the political organization of a society, in other words, how and why did state distance itself from religion?

Taylor defines the historical origin of secularism as the urge to find a way out from religious struggle. "The need was felt for a ground of coexistence for Christians of different confessional persuasions" (Taylor, 1988: 32). A ground for regulating public domain where different sects can

peacefully coexist should be found. Taylor maintains that there were two different strategies for establishing such a ground without making one or the other belief dominant. The first one is ‘the common ground strategy’ which is “to establish a certain ethic of peaceful coexistence and political order, a set of grounds for obedience, which...was based on those doctrines which were common to all Christian sects, or even to all theists” (Taylor, 1988: 33). Here the important thing to do is to discover the beliefs, ideas or principles which are common to all different sects and to accept these common grounds for our coexistence. This strategy is different than trying to find a neutral ground, or finding an independent set of principles for our coexistence, which constitutes the second strategy. Taylor defines it as “an independent political ethic” (Taylor, 1988: 37). In this case, the necessary principles of our coexistence are tried to be reached with reference to the human condition.

In Taylor’s analysis of the origins of secularism and his approach to the idea of secularism what is important for our discussion is the fact that he tries to explain and justify secularism with reference to plurality. In terms of its origin in Europe – western secularism – it was related with the plurality of religious confessions within Christianity. It was a principle for a solution for the immediate problem of religious struggle. Indeed, the need for the emergence of the principle of secularism was related with the foundation of the social and the political conditions necessary for the coexistence of differences. It is worth to discuss secularism and relate it with democracy with reference to this moment of origin.

At the point where we start to think and justify secularism with reference to a polity and society where plurality and differences are acknowledged and guaranteed, secularism should be understood as a ground principle against any homogenizing and totalizing tendencies of any sort for the sake of the protection of plurality and heterogeneity. From this perspective, we can problematize religious dogma and tradition as one source of homogenization, exclusion and oppression of differences but also we can see the very same problems emerging with nation building processes, which would come up with its own mechanism of homogenization and exclusion. Nation comes up with its own possibility of democracy by defining the people as the subject of democracy but also as being a boundary drawing, it also contains its own act of closure and homogenization.<sup>1</sup>

Here, it should be underlined that by plurality I don't mean simply the existence of different identities, beliefs or interests, which is a liberal conception of the term. In line with the theoretical discussion on the meaning of politics in the previous chapter, plurality is related with the political in the sense of permanent openness. If we can successfully establish or disclose the relation between secularism and plurality, it would be more easy to show both the relation between secularism and democracy through the notion of the

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on the problematic relation between nation and the Enlightenment see Robert Wokler, 1999. "The Enlightenment: The Nation State and the Primal Patricide of Modernity" paper presented at Budapest : Collegium Budapest, Institute for Advanced Study; İrem, Nazım. 2007. "Aydınlanma ve Sınırlılık Siyaseti Olarak Ulus Devlet Modernliği," Doğu Batı 39



political and also the possible moments of the closure or displacement of politics embedded in secularism when it acts as a ruling project.

Securing plurality, acknowledging heterogeneity and differences as an inevitable and worth to celebrate features of human condition, not as problems to deal with. Making possible the coexistence of differences prevents establishing monopolies by religion or any other source. Indeed, the principle of secularism can establish its link with democracy as long as it functions as a guarantee for the continuity of plurality and heterogeneity in a society. Secularism must prevent the establishment of any authoritative source of public reason – sacred or secular, which closes the political contestation and critical reflection through different mechanism of declaring themselves as unquestionable truths.

Secularism, in this sense, is not exclusively related with being against tradition or religious dogma, but more broadly speaking, it is related with “the profound contestability of the fundamentals” (Connolly, 1999), instead of replacing old ones with the new ones. To put it differently, secularism should be thought within the opposition of closure and openness of the political. Thus, the linkage between secularism and democracy is far from being essential or automatic, but it is a conditional relation. And that condition is related with permanent openness of the political.

### **3.5 Plurality and the Political**

On the contrary to an essentialist relation, I would argue, there is a conditional relation between secularism and democracy. It would be helpful to recall the distinction between secularism as constitutive of democracy, on the one hand, and secularism as a ruling project to regulate and control the religion, on the other. I argue that secularism, as a constitutive principle for democracy, should be related with the permanent openness of the political as its main aim to maintain. On the contrary, secularism as a ruling project for regulating the religion in particular, and the society in general does not necessarily constitutive for democracy. Even an authoritarian reflex is embedded within such a secularism. The critical question here is: Which project secularism has been a part of? I would argue that secularism should be part of a project of the political rather than of a ruling project. To use Rancière's conceptions and distinctions between politics and police, secularism can be a part of the police order, which try to establish a certain way of distribution of the sensible.

Thinking through this perspective, in Turkish case, secularism has been the carrier of two important moments of the closure of politics, which in turn became important obstacles in front of the development of Turkish democracy. My argument is that, Berkes's narration of the development of secularism is not able to provide us the necessary tools and outlook for detecting these anti-political and undemocratic moments. In the following

parts, I attempt to show two sources of closure nested within the idea of secularism as the way it developed in Turkey. For doing this, I discuss secularism as being part of the nation building process and the consolidation of national identity. Later, I also relate it with the development of *raison d'Etat* in Turkey as the main motive behind Turkish modernization.

I argue that secularism as narrated by Berkes became a part of a ruling project which ignored the paradoxical nature of the political. That ruling project aimed to consolidations, settlements and boundaries, or to use Rancière's term, police order. It yearns for the elimination of contest and unsettlements from its order. For this purpose, it deploys the necessary reflexes of closures of the political space within the founding ideology. Secularism as a ruling project makes us forget its police character and tries to acquire the status of an uncontested neutral ground principle.

### **3.6 Secularism and Reform as 'Securing the State'**

It seems possible to argue that throughout the history of Ottoman-Turkish modernization, 'securing the state' have been the most important consideration behind the reforms. Kazancıgil points out that the question "how can this state be saved?" (Kazancıgil, 1982: 38) had occupied the minds of reformers beginning from the early reforms as importing and adopting Western institutions, particularly in the military organization for saving the

empire to the foundation of the Republic. As Kazancıgil (1982: 38) maintains, “this consciousness was to produce the Kemalist movement which saw that unless a modern state based on the principles of citizenship, nationalism and secularism were created, it would be impossible to preserve the independence of Turkey, which would fall into the status of a colonized territory.” Indeed, reform as securing the state in a sense has produced *raison d’Etat* in Turkey. As a result of this reason, state has been given a prior place. Insel (2001: 17) explains that the consciousness of Kemalists were shaped by the fact that they witnessed the collapse of the Empire. Therefore, the central concern became the elimination of the threat of abolition of the state.

Two of the most important sources of such a threat against the state were the heterogeneous characteristic of the population, on the one hand, and religious reactionary movements, on the other. National identity as one source of overcoming these problems is discussed below. Secularism, however, was the safety-belt against religious reactions. The important point here to underline is that secularism as part of this *raison d’Etat* took the form of regulating and administering the religion, instead of a strict separation of religion and the state. As Davison (2003: 341) argues, “Islam was not disestablished, it was differently established.” It seems possible to argue that Kemalists wanted to control and regulate religion as the source of reaction that they afraid most. Fuat Keyman explains the consequence of secularism as regulation of the religion for plurality and democracy. For him “the more secularism is used by the state elite as a political project to control religion,

the less pluralistic and democratic the state has become in governing its society” (Keyman, 2007: 216).

### **3.7 Secularism and Nation Building**

Nation building process and construction of a national identity was also related with the motive of securing the state. Nation and national identity was expected to overcome the possible threats of disintegration coming from the components of the Ottoman population. As Insel (2001) suggests, constructing a unitary and homogeneous society has been the most important aspiration of Kemalism. Against the sociological reality of heterogeneity and plurality of the population in Turkey, Kemalism has given utmost importance to construct the appearance of unity and homogeneity. Accordingly, it has always reacted against the public appearance of ethnic, religious or class-based identities that may erode the national identity. Insel (2001: 18-19) states that unitary state, unitary society and unitary identity have been the backbone of the official ideology in Turkey. For Kemalism, plurality and heterogeneity have become the most important problem to deal with.

Secularism, then, has an important role in the project of nation building and constructing a national identity. Nation building, in a way, carries a paradox within itself similar to politics. It is related with inclusion, definition of the people, and boundary-drawing as well as it is related with

excluding, creating remainders and closure of the political for the sake of unity and homogeneity. Secularism, as part of such a boundary-drawing, transforms this paradox and moment of closure onto itself and starts to serve for the sake of unity and identity, rather than plurality and heterogeneity. It is crucial to understand that the secular national identity, after presenting itself discursively as all-inclusive identity, accuses the remainders of the system for their condition of exclusion. Instead of being responsive to the remainders by placing openness of the political space in its foundation, it declares them as archaic, fundamentalist, separatist etc.

Nation-state and national identity, as narrated by Berkes, become a rather advanced level of modernization and secularization. However, as being part of the nation-building project, secularism contains moments of closure of politics, and reduces politics into a successful maintenance of unity and administering society. From Berkes's perspective, it is not possible to relate secularism with nation-state and national identity in such a way to show the authoritarian and violent moments against plurality. That is to say, secularism as part of the nation building process and consolidation of national identity played its part at the expense of its relation with plurality by closing politics, which in turn makes its tie with democracy problematic. It seems possible to argue that, as a result of this reason behind secularism, even today any demand coming from 'the usual suspects' – ethnic and religious demands – the regime, frequently with reference to its secular or national character,

responds by closing politics and political space more and more for those who should be kept invisible and inaudible.

The crucial point here about Berkes's narration of the development of secularism in Turkey is that it provides us a duality between religious backwardness and modernizing forces and every instance of problems before democratization can only be meaningful within this duality. Consequently, the source of problems of democracy should be searched either in the acts of the forces of backwardness or in the failures of the modernizers. My argument is that Berkes does not take into account that not the failures but the very success of the modernizers may create obstacles for democracy by closing politics and homogenizing plurality. Such an approach, in the first place necessitates developing an understanding of modernity, which consists of contradictions within itself.

### **3.8 Teleological Understanding of History and the Holistic Conception of Modernity**

Berkes accepts the history of modernization as a history of evolution. As a consequence of such a perspective, Berkes seems to take all the events and changes he chooses to narrate as the steps or phases that prepare the necessary conditions for the transformation from a traditional to a modern society. In

line with this reasoning, modern society is the maturity for every society to evolve as the result of their development.

For Berkes analyzing historical events provides us the possibility of making observations in social sciences. If we can analyze history systematically we can reveal the causality between the events and we can reveal the underlying aim of history which is the essence of every particular event. In return, this conclusion can provide the necessary tools to evaluate any problem which we have today or which we may have in the future. Because in terms of their essence every political and social problem can be evaluated within the framework of this *telos* and can be distinguished as serving for or against the essential purpose of the history.

Berkes maintains in the preface of the Turkish edition of *the Development of Secularism in Turkey* (2002) that this study, which traces the imprints of the development of the process of secularization in Turkey, is not written as the history of the events from the early eighteenth century till the foundation of the Republic. Historical events are narrated in the study in terms of their role as a precondition for the establishment of the Republic. Later in the same preface he states that his study tries to show how all these internal and external events flow compulsorily to make the birth of a republican regime based on a nation possible (Berkes, 2002:13). These statements and the words Berkes chose to use such as secularization as a *process*, roles as *preconditions*, *flow* of the historical events with a



*compulsory* conclusion reveals clearly his teleological understanding of history and holistic conception of modernity.

For the main problematic of this study i.e. the closure of the political Berkes's account has important limitations at this point. First, in line with this teleological model, Berkes is more inclined to emphasize gradual evolutionary changes and historical continuities, rather than to account for those movements of radical change, ruptures and contingencies. He does this by relating every past event with one another and also reducing them to a simple mirroring of the process of secularization. This narrative itself is non-political in the sense of ignoring the contingency and reducing political actor, action and event into a position in which they depend on a historical necessity.

Secondly, once historical events and changes are tried to be understood from a teleological model, then, holistic conception of modernity follows as its consequence. The main feature of the holistic conception does not make any distinction between different dimensions of modernity. Whether economic, physical, technological, social, cultural or political modernization is in question; all of them are essentially parallel processes and contribute to reaching the same result. For this reason, any conflict between these different modernizations would not occur as a possibility. In other words, it is not possible to think, for instance, economic or technological modernization can create obstacles for democratization. Modernity does not create contradictions within itself; the only contradiction during the process of modernization is in

between the traditional and the modern. Democracy, from this perspective, is a compulsory consequence of modernization at large. Since at the center of the holistic conception there is the idea of progress and a linear development model, democracy is one of the inevitable stages on this linear journey of modernization.

Reasoning from this framework, Berkes evaluates the history of modernization in Turkey from the vantage-point of secularization which he accepts as one of the processes of modernization together with rationalization, bureaucratization, economic and technological advancement, and also democratization. It is evident that Berkes makes a distinction between different spheres of life and corresponding modernization paces. He mentions about economic developments and innovations in terms of the establishment of modern national economy, and he also mentions separately cultural and social modernization. The critical point is that though these different dimensions are acknowledged, it is assumed that there would be only one conclusion with the parallel and consistent developments in each sphere.

As a necessary consequence of the holistic and teleological conception, Berkes delineates two antagonistic forces in the society. One is the modernizing force supporting changes and innovations and the other one is the conservative force trying to protect the traditional system, and to conserve their own interests. Berkes states that every force of backwardness, one way or another, relates itself with religion and since his narration of modernization

is based on the development of secularism, two opposed social forces turn out to be secularists and anti-secularist.

Once the political struggle between secularist and anti-secularist forces is over, the following problems are only a matter of rational administration. The political can reappear as a result of the revitalization of the anti-secular reaction. Consequently, the secularism can prevail with the finalization of political struggle. Thinking from within secular / anti-secular duality has important repercussions on our capacity to make healthy assessments about the question of democracy. Among others, this perspective forces every political demand and reaction into either one of the polar positions. In other words, it tries to understand political problems by translating them or trying to decode them with the language of the same dichotomy. It reduces and consumes the plurality and difference within the political sphere.

### **3.9 Berkes's Conception of Politics**

Another way to analyze Berkes's perspective is to dwell upon his conception of politics. He uses the term politics in relation with state, governmental organization and administration. Any reform attempt in his analysis is not conceived as political as long as it aims a restructuring in the state. Democratic politics, then, amounts to the organization of the state with modern principles, particularly with the principle of popular sovereignty. In

his discussion of the Kemalist restructuring we see that Berkes tends to understand popular sovereignty as taking the nation as the social substratum of the state sovereignty. The identity of the people should be based on nationality. Such an understanding of democracy cannot see the paradoxical nature of any definition of the people. On the one hand, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Keenan (2003: 1) points out that the people is “the radical premise – or promise” in a democratic politics. It is the people who rules. Democratic politics, however, requires a definition of the people and also requires a permanent openness in questioning this very definition at the very same time. And as we see in Honig (1993) every closure and settlement produces its own remainders. And these remainders of any settlement should have the means and channels to unsettle the boundaries which exclude them, even the boundaries of the definition of the people. Reading from this perspective, the reflex, which displaces politics in Berkes appears in his urge to reach the settlement of modern institutions, foremost secularism and national unity. In other words, democratic politics in Berkes appears as an act of boundary drawing. For him, the success of the journey of secularization and modernization would be possible by a finalization of the struggle between secularists and anti-secularists by drawing a boundary with modern institutions and principles and also by closing and preventing the possible ways of any revitalization of these forces of backwardness. From this perspective, then, modernization is the replacement of the traditional framework with a modern one. This replacement may solve important problems and be considered as a step towards a democratic society. Yet it also

consists of limitations and obstacles for a democratic polity, when we read this modernization as another kind of boundary drawing and closure. In other words, when politics is understood in relation with resistance to any closure and settlement, modern or traditional, then, Berkes's narration of modernization comes up with its own act of the closure of the political.

Democratic politics, from radical political perspective, is about building coalitions for settlement and allowing them to be worn down by the right kinds of pressures when they arise. The capacity of the actors to resist, to unsettle and resettle, to establish and to demolish, to accept and criticize is related with the political. Modernization story in Berkes shows the history of a transformation of people from subject (tebaa) to citizen. But it reaches its limit in explaining the existence of another transformation one which from citizen as spectator to citizen as actor, as (re)founder. The first can be evaluated within the limits of modernization in case of Berkes, but the second one should be maintained for the sake of democracy.

The priority of secularism is another feature of Berkes's approach. Secularism and its phases of development are presented as the main axes of Turkish modernization. With reference to differences of Ottoman-Turkish society, he seems to accept the history of Turkish modernization as the development of secularism. Indeed, secularism, modernization, westernization appear as interchangeable words explaining nothing but the very same development and that development is the bifurcation of state and religion. As

mentioned earlier, in Ottoman society religion is an indissoluble part of every sphere of life. Any modernizing development is, then, inevitable related with this bifurcation. At the end of its developmental stages, when secularism met the idea of the nation as its social bases, then democracy as a political consequence of secularism was realized.

Consequently, secularism is given priority also as the boundary of modern democratic politics. It is the foundation of democracy in Berkes's perspective. This brings the moment of boundary drawing as a democracy problem. The radical impulse of democracy – permanent openness – should be closed and controlled when it reaches secularism as its own guarantee. However, this is also the moment where the priority given to secularism starts to produce its own anti-democratic implications by closing the political. The priority should be given to the political.

### **3.10 Secularism and Democracy: A Need for a Renegotiation**

Different practices of moral and political closures can be detected from institutional structure of the state to the everyday life practices in the society. The sources and actors of these closures may vary and located at different spheres of life. The important thing for democratic politics is to develop resistance to these impulses of closures whatever their sources are. Indeed, democratic politics should be registered as a site of resistance to closures, to

boundary-drawings and to finalizations as well as mechanisms to reach agreements and consolidations.

From Berkes's perspective the success of the journey of modernization and secularization in Turkey would be possible by a finalization of the struggle between forces of modernization and of backwardness and tradition. The success lies in the replacement of traditional boundaries with the modern ones. Secularism as constitutive of modernity comes up with important gains for freedom and equality. However, for the establishment of democratic politics, certain dangerous reflexes of closure are also nested within it. The need, then, is to renegotiate secularism in such a way to disclose these moments of closure.

The duality that Berkes invites us to understand Turkish political history forces every political demand into this duality. It consumes every other possibility in the political sphere. Every pressure and resistance coming to the boundaries of the establishment is evaluated with the terms of this duality. Without taking into account the multi-dimensional and essentially contested characteristic of secularism, we cannot possibly register the anti-democratic impulses within the modern institutions as well as traditional one. As Elizabeth Hurd (2004: 237) rightly points out, "Secularists dissociate themselves from their own violent and anti-democratic tendencies by displacing them on to religion". Berkes's narration closes the possibility of registering such a tendency in secularism when it starts to act as part of a

ruling project to regulate and administer the society. The need is, then, is to renegotiate secularism in order to eliminate the impasse it creates for further democratization in Turkey. To use Nancy Fraser's (1984) phrase "deconstruction of false dichotomies" embedded within the historical narratives is an important part of such an attempt of re-negotiation and re-description of secularism.

It seems possible to argue that increasing plurality and heterogeneity is a modern phenomenon. At the very same time, however, modernity comes also with its own mechanisms of homogenization, namely nation state and national identity. In this paradoxical development of modern society, democratic politics becomes the most important way of resisting this homogenization. Within this context, secularism becomes the crucial constitutive principle of a democratic polity as long as it serves as a guarantee of plurality and the permanent of openness of the political.

In this renegotiation and redescription of secularism, what we have to rethink is not the question that whether we should be secular or not; or, whether we should based our social and political organization on religion; the question that we have to ask is why we need the principle of secularism. As William Connolly (1999) points out, what is crucial is to maintain "the profound contestability of the fundamentals."



## CHAPTER IV

### ŞERİF MARDİN, CENTER/PERIPHERY AND DEMOCRACY

Democracy is, first of all, a practice, which means that the very same institutions of power may or may not be accompanied by a democratic life. The same forms of parliamentary powers, the same institutional frameworks can either give rise to a democratic life, that is, a subjectivization of the gap between two ways of counting or accounting for the community, or operate simply as instruments for the reproduction of an oligarchic power.

Rancière 2003.

Among the social scientists in Turkey, only a few numbers of scholars have provided a wide range of analysis for explaining political, social, cultural and economic dimensions of social change in Turkey. As one of them, the name of Serif Mardin has occupied a distinctive and special place. As Taha Parla points out, Mardin has become a leading social scientist in the development of social sciences in Turkey with his ‘systematic documentary analysis’, ‘text interpretations’ and foremost ‘critical mind’.

Mardin has many books and articles on different topics from political theory to economic history, from sociology to history of ideas. In his study on Şerif Mardin, Alim Arlı classifies Mardin's works under four main topics. First group of works are about the history of political ideas; *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: Modern Intellectual and Political History of the Middle East* (2000), and *The Political Ideas of Young Turks 1895 – 1908* (1964). Second group are on sociology of knowledge, ideology and historiography; *Ideology* (1992), *Religion and Ideology* (1983), and *Political and Social Sciences* (1990). Third one is about the sociology of religion; *Religion and Politics in Turkey* (1991), and *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (1992). Finally, the fourth group is concentrated on political science, sociology and the intellectual life in Turkey, *Society and Politics in Turkey* (1990) and *Turkish Modernization* (1991). As Arlı (2004) also notes that besides these major works which are accepted as the cornerstones in the social sciences in Turkey, there are various other published and unpublished articles and lectures of Mardin showing his intellectual depth and contribution in many different areas such as the historical roots of Turkish modernization, methodological discussions for understanding modernity, and the main dynamics of political and intellectual life in Turkey.

One of the most important superiority of Şerif Mardin's analysis is that he is able to see the limitations of the modernization paradigm in explaining the complexities and controversies of modernity. Bahattin Akşit (2005: 66-67)

underlines that with his studies on Islam and its role in civil society, on the relationship between religion and politics, Mardin challenges the widely accepted theories of modernization and secularization thesis. Fuat Keyman (2005) also underlines Mardin's leading role in the analysis of Turkish modernity. As opposed to the modernization theory, Mardin, Keyman states, achieves to go beyond the modernization paradigm by concentrating on the question of modernity instead of modernization.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the extensiveness of its implications and influences on social sciences in Turkey, Şerif Mardin's analyses of Turkish politics based on center-periphery opposition has had a unique importance. It is used by many scholars of Turkish politics for grasping the existence of strong state and the weakness of civil society and democratic participation in today's Turkey.<sup>2</sup>

From military interventions to the Constitutional Court's decisions of political party closures; from political Islam to the headscarf issue; from the Kurdish question to illegal organizations within the state; from the appointments of supreme court judges and university presidents to election of the President of Republic all these different topics have been evaluated

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed analysis on Mardin and his contribution to discussions on Turkish modernization with his hermeneutic approach as an alternative to positivist analysis see: Keyman (2005)

<sup>2</sup> Whereas Mardin focuses on the cultural dimension of center-periphery cleavage, Metin Heper uses the same model to analyze the institutional dimension of it in his strong state tradition argument. Similarly, Özbudun and Kalaycıoğlu try to reveal the consequences of the center-periphery cleavage in the political parties and the electoral behavior. Heper, 1985a; Heper, 1980; Özbudun, 1976; Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin, 1992.

through the perspective that Mardin provides with the dichotomy of the center and periphery. It seems possible to argue that the center-periphery opposition from the time of its first publication to today has gained a paradigmatic status for the studies on Turkish politics.

As it is mentioned above, Mardin's works in general, and his account on the center-periphery opposition in particular, has superiority compared to the modernization paradigm in understanding the complexities and controversies of Turkish modernity. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that it has no weakness or limitations in understanding political life in Turkey. In this chapter, my goal is to show such a weakness and limitation of center-periphery opposition as a discourse on democracy.

First, I will present a short biography of Şerif Mardin. Before presenting Mardin's narration of the development of Turkish politics based on center-periphery model, I will provide a summary of the main contours of the model as developed by Edward Shils. Later, I will attempt to make a critical reading of Mardin's dichotomy by asking the question whether this model is able to provide us a lens through which we can see and understand the multiplicity and diversity of instances of the closure of the political as a problem of democracy. In so doing, Mardin's conception and presentation of the periphery, his description of the peripheral challenge as democratic; and lastly his understanding of social integration on a consensual basis as the main points of questioning. With these questions, I will try show the weaknesses of

the center-periphery model in revealing the instances of the closure of politics. And furthermore, I claim that as a result of Mardin's aspiration for social integration, he also himself displaces politics and reduces it into a way of integration.

#### **4.1 Şerif Mardin: A Short Biography<sup>3</sup>**

Şerif Mardin was born in İstanbul in 1927 as a member of Mardinizade family which has a long tradition of well-educated bureaucrats, scholars and administrators. As part of this tradition, Şerif Mardin's grandfather, Mardinizade Arif Bey, became the governor in Damascus and Basra. Mardin's father Şemseddin Arif Mardin was a very successful bureaucrat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mardin started his education at the Galatasaray Lycee and completed his high school education in U.S.A. Later, he earned his bachelor degree in political science from the Stanford University and continued his graduate study in international relations at the Johns Hopkins University. Mardin worked as an assistant between 1954-56 at the University of Ankara, Department of Political Science. He completed his Ph.D. study at Stanford University and gained his degree with his dissertation titled "*The Young Ottoman Movement: A Study in the Evolution of Turkish Political Thought in the nineteenth century*".

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed biography of Şerif Mardin see; Arlı, 2004.

Besides his academic studies, in 1956, Mardin worked as the general secretary of *Hürriyet Partisi* (Freedom Party), a liberal political party and became a writer in *Forum*, a journal that was repudiated with its opposition to the Democrat Party government. Mardin, after a short period of time, withdrew from both positions. As Kayalı (2004a: 169) maintains, his involvement in politics and his opposition of Democrat Party's university policies and his writings in *Forum* constituted the reasons behind Mardin's urge to understand the main dynamics of the political life in Turkey.

In 1964, he became an associate professor at the University of Ankara with his study titled "The Political Thoughts of Young Turks". And in 1969, he gained his professorship at the same university. Kayalı argues that Mardin's interest on the Republican period and recent historical developments can be found in his position at the Ankara University in the 1960s. He developed important criticism of the mainstream explanations of political life and also of Marxism. Among his critics to Marxist analysis, Kayalı (2004a) counts "Historical Determinants of Stratification: Social Class and Class Consciousness in Turkey" (1967), "Toplum Bilimlerinde Teoriler Uzerine Bir Not" (1964) and also "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics" (1973). After thirteen years of teaching career at the University of Ankara, he became a faculty member at the Boğaziçi University. Mardin was not only a faculty member at that university but also he played an important role in the establishment of the University and the Department of Political Science

within it. Until the end of 1980s, he worked as a faculty member and also acted as a dean at the Boğaziçi University.

Besides his academic positions at universities in Turkey, Mardin has been a very important, widely accepted and welcomed scholar in universities around the world. He gave lectures and worked at Princeton, Columbia, University of California and Harvard in U.S.A., Ecole des Hautes en Sciences Sociales in France, and Oxford University in England. Between 1989-1999, Mardin became a faculty member at the Department of International Relations, the American University in Washington DC. At the same university, Şerif Mardin was also the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies. In 1994, Mardin became one of the founding members of *Yeni Demokrasi Hareketi* (New Democracy Movement), a liberal political party led by a businessman Cem Boyner. Later, he came back to Turkey and joined the Sabancı University in 1999. He has been teaching at that university at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences since then.

## **4.2 Center and Periphery in Edward Shils**

“Society has a center. There is a central zone in the structure of society” (Shils, 1975:3). This is the basic assumption of the center-periphery model as developed by Edward Shils. Society is structurally differentiated into a center and a periphery. What does Shils mean by the center? We understand what he

means by it at the end of his discussion on the basic constitutive components of the center and the ways in which these components are interrelated and operate together in creating an order and a structure of authority in the society. First of all, Shils makes a clarification about the notion of the center by noting that the center does not necessarily “a spatially located phenomenon” (Shils, 1975:3). That is to say, the center should not be understood with the terms of geometry or geography. It does not denote the center of a territory. Although in any society there are spatial reflections of the center, the notion as such is rather related with the realm of values and beliefs, which is the first constitutive component of the center in Shils’s model.

The center, as Shils explains, is “the center of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs, which govern the society” (Shils, 1975: 3). As it is understood from this explanation the center is related with creating an order and governing the society accordingly. Indeed, in his discussion on center and periphery, Shils seems to explain the ways and means of this act of governing and of ordering instead of giving a simple definition of the notion of the center. The central values and beliefs become the governing order of symbols by creating a strong link to the realm of sacred and that of action. The former affiliation helps the central values and beliefs to have a higher and authoritative status compared to other tendencies, preferences and values existing in the society. The center, by this way, claims to be the ultimate and irreducible. This does not mean that the center only consists of religious



beliefs, which are accepted as sacred in the society. Rather, the center claims itself in the same nature of the sacred.

Even so far, the words ‘order’, ‘governing’, ‘ultimate’, and ‘irreducible’ evince that the center is more than a set of values and beliefs. The second constituent component of the center, as a phenomenon of the realm of action, is the institutional structure, which consists of offices, roles, and a network of organizations through which the central values and beliefs are implemented and diffused throughout the society. The central institutional system, as Shils puts, is the embodiment of the central value system. Since no society has homogeneous values, the status of the center cannot be taken for granted as permanent position. The order and the corresponding structure of authority should be reproduced daily. And the center tries to achieve this through the institutional structure.

The third constitutive component of the center is the elites. These are the persons who are accepted as the necessary qualifications for exercising ruling authority in the society. Their decisions and the roles they play in the institutional structure determine the standards of judgment and behavior for the society. Through their actions and decisions, the central values and beliefs becomes the authoritative standard in the society. It seems possible to argue that the elites and the center reinforce their status mutually. The elites are the authority in the society and therefore they provide the authoritarian status for the central values and belief. On the other hand, the center, especially through

the affiliation it has with the sacred, provides a strong basis for appreciation of the authority of the elites. A web of authority and legitimacy is established in the society as a result of the integration of the elites and the central values and beliefs.

As Joel Migdal (1985:44) maintains, the center, in Shils's account, is "activist and aggressive." The central values are recurrently and actively enforced to the society by the decisions and actions of the elites through the institutional structure. The basic problem in front of the center is that its values and beliefs are not accepted or embraced equally in different parts of the society. The degree of attachment to the central values decreases in some parts and for some groups in the society. "As we move from the center of society...to the hinterland or the periphery, over which authority is exercised, attachment to the central value system becomes attenuated." (Shils, 1975:10). The periphery seems to create problem for the center by the dissensus they show towards the central value system. Shils underlines that the level of tension between center and periphery increases in modern societies. In pre-modern societies, on the one hand the center does not have the adequate means to spread its values and beliefs to the mass of the population. The lack of adequate means create less problem for the center who has no strong urge to regulate and govern the whole society and population. On the other hand, there is a remoteness and distance between the center and the periphery. The peripheral groups live their lives in terms of the values of their close proximity without having any perception and attachment to a larger society.

Therefore, the hierarchy between the center and periphery becomes less disturbing and alienating for the periphery. In modern large-scale societies, the center has efficient and adequate means to spread its values to the society such as mass communication and central education. The level of participation of the periphery to the values of the center and the sense of belonging and affiliation to the society is higher in modern societies. However, in modern societies, Shils argues, the tension between the center and the periphery is also intensified. The hierarchy between the center and the periphery starts to create injury and alienation on the part of the periphery.

Although Shils mentions the increasing tension between center and periphery, he seems to accept this tension as the success of modernity. As a result of widespread education, for instance, the mass of population starts to gain the qualifications of the elites, which in turn undermines the authority of the elites. The hierarchy between the center and the periphery begins to be questioned not because the periphery sees the center as alien to its values, but because the periphery increasingly participates to the central value system. Maybe this is because Shils celebrates the effective center as the product of modernity. For Shils, as Migdal (1985:45) critically underlines, modernity, as the destination of the historical evolution, entails democracy and it means being Western and scientific.

Compared to the conclusion Shills reaches as a result of center periphery model he develops, it seems possible to say that Şerif Mardin not

only employs center-periphery model to explain and understand the social and political developments in Turkish society, but also use the model to develop a critical perspective for the consequences of modernization implemented by an effective center.

### **4.3 Center-Periphery Cleavage in Turkish Politics**

“Society has a center.” (Mardin, 1973: 169) Mardin starts his article with the main assumption of the center-periphery model as we see in Shils. Accordingly, an analysis on the components of the center, its relation with the periphery and in this relation its ability to resist to the demands of the periphery would give us an adequate understanding about social integration and social change in a given society. Since societies differ from each other in the components that embody the center, analyzing the center would help us to understand the social and political life of a given society. A comparison between societies can be made with reference to the condition of the center and its relation with the periphery. Far from being an exception, the Ottoman Turkish society and its history of modernization, then, can be best understood by analyzing the development of the center, its main characteristics, and its relation with periphery. In other words, the modernization history can be told as a story of the center-periphery relations and its development through time.

### **4.3.1 Turkey in Between the Middle East and Europe with its Strong Center**

To make his argument about the necessity of analyzing the center-periphery relations for understanding the history of the Ottoman-Turkish polity, Mardin emphasizes the strength of the center in the Ottoman Empire and also its centralization capacity in comparison to other Middle Eastern states. The recruitment mechanisms of the ruling elite from the religious minorities, ability to control taxation and land administration, monopolizing the orthodox view of religion that in turn gave the chance to dominate education and justice systems are counted as evidences of this capacity. However, a comparison made between the Ottoman polity and other Middle Eastern states would give us only half of the picture. To reach an adequate understanding about the centralization in the Ottoman state, it should be evaluated in terms of the effects of absolutist state and modern nation-state – two centralized forms of the Western state system – on the Ottoman institutions.

In this relational and comparative analysis, Mardin states that the developments in the European state system had important consequences for the Ottoman state system, initially seen as a rival to compete against, then as a model to be adopted for reforms. Additionally, as analyzed comparatively, European developments could be seen as “the structural contrasts to Ottoman institutions” (Mardin, 1973: 170). That is to say, which and why certain institutions did not develop in the Ottoman case can be understood by paying

attention to the conditions of development of the same institutions in the European case. Foremost, for Mardin, the possibility of compromise in European politics, and as a result, the development of a much more stable center-periphery relations, would be informative to understand the development of a more antagonistic one in the Turkish case.

By putting the development and historical transformations of the European ‘centers’ as the contrast of those took place for the Ottoman ‘center’, Mardin (1973: 170 and 1991a: 114) opens a way to justify the main thesis of his article; “the confrontation between center and periphery was the most important social cleavage underlying Turkish politics and one that seemed to have survived more than a century of modernization.” Thus, the center-periphery relation is proposed as a key to understand the history of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization.

The main difference of the centralization process of Europe is the compromises which were achieved out of the confrontation between the forces of the center and the periphery. These compromises became the reason behind the successful social integration. Secondly, the confrontations in question were emerged between various groups which became the sources of different political identification. This multi-dimensionality made the achieved social integration much more flexible.

On the contrary to the European experience, in the Ottoman case of centralization, Mardin (1973: 170) argues, “the major confrontation was unidimensional, always a clash between the center and the periphery”, rather than the existence of multiple confrontations of different groups. This unidimensional confrontation has been the main explanatory cleavage in the Turkish political history, and explaining this forceful and perpetual cleavage, as he maintains, is the aim of Mardin’s analyses.

#### **4.3.2 The Roots of the Center-Periphery Cleavage: Ottoman Society**

Mardin underlines a number of issues which create the center-periphery confrontation such as the uneasy relation of the state and urban dwellers with the nomads; the question of peripheral nobility which had a potential to demand autonomy and may erode the state’s central power; the problem of religious heterodoxy which became the source of resistance to the state’s monopoly on religious orthodoxy and in turn on the system of education and justice.

Giving the fact that the territorial expansion of the Empire made much more difficult to establish a central control on these peripheral elements, localism was preferred as the relation between the center and the periphery

instead of searching for the ways of a complete integration. Consequently, Mardin (1973:171) argues,

“the center and the periphery were two very loosely related worlds. This aspect of Ottoman society, together with social fragmentation, set one of the primary problems of the Ottoman establishment: the confrontation between the Sultan and his officials on the one hand, and the highly segmented structure of Ottoman Anatolia on the other.”

Mardin maintains another dimension of this center-periphery opposition that is related to status and symbolic differences. One important aspect of this dimension concerns the recruitment of the officials among non-Moslem groups. This mechanism created an exclusionary practice for the Moslems. This exclusion from the official posts increased, as Mardin suggests, with the secularization process. Since then, the most important battleground between the center and the periphery became getting a place in the state bureaucracy.

The center-periphery opposition had also economic and cultural dimensions. Immunity from tax, having administrative power over taxation and land-use provided important advantages to the official elite. Thus the gap between the center and the periphery was widened by the economic power of the former. A similar contrast also appeared culturally, leading to different life-styles of these two worlds. As Mardin (1973: 173) states, “[r]elative to the heterogeneity of the periphery, the ruling class was singularly compact; this was, above all, a cultural phenomenon.” The cultural dimension of the center-periphery opposition was produced by the development of an isolated



high culture of the center. Same educational backgrounds and patrimonial character of the official elite made possible for the creation of an exclusive cultural codes, status and life-style. The periphery, on the contrary, could not achieve to have such a homogeneous culture because of their fragmented structure. Additionally, having a limited access to the educational institutions of the official elites, any access to, or mixture with the high culture of the center could not be possible for the periphery. Thus, peripheral counter-culture, for Mardin, not only had no access to the center but also they were very aware of their lower and secondary status. This cultural dimension is a very crucial evidence for the existence of the center-periphery opposition. Whereas the center wanted to keep their culture apart and isolated from any kind of peripheral effect, the periphery, contrary to their fragmented structure, could only unite around their negative attitude to the officialdom. Mardin (1973: 174) suggests,

“[b]ecause of the fragmentation of the periphery, of the disparate elements that entered into it, it was to begin to develop its own code much later. In earlier times this code simply consisted of an awareness of the burdens imposed by the center.”

To put it differently, the polemical relation with the center turned out to be the unifying source in the periphery.

### **4.3.3 Center-Periphery Cleavage and its Reflections on the Westernization of the Nineteenth Century**

Already established hostility of the periphery to state's economic and administrative domination increased during the decline of the Empire when the official elites became "plunderers of their own society" (Mardin, 1973: 174). With this development, Mardin states, the domination of the state gained the characteristic of 'Oriental despotism', outcome of which was increasing power and legitimacy of the local notables in the eyes of local population as the defenders of their interest against the domination of the center.

With the Westernization efforts of the official elite, the center-periphery opposition gained a new momentum, which increased the cleavage rather than turning the relation into an integrative direction. It seems possible to argue that the center started to turn its face to Western institutions as models for development and reform, whereas the periphery was mobilized against Westernization, which was fueled by its confrontation to the center. Increasing cultural alienation of the masses, which made social integration much more difficult, became one of the outcomes of the Westernization efforts. Thus, after the nineteenth century, instead of losing its explanatory power, the center-periphery relations continued to be a key for Turkish modernization.

Giving the fragmented social structure of the Ottoman population and the center-periphery opposition, Mardin(1973: 175) underlines three problems

in front of the modernizers of the nineteenth century who wanted to build a nation-state:

“the first was the integration of non-Moslem groups within the nation-state, and second consisted of accomplishing the same for the Moslem elements of the periphery – to bring some order into the mosaic structure of the Empire. Finally, these ‘discrete elements’ in the ‘national territory’ had to be brought ‘into meaningful participation in the political system.’”

As Mardin maintains the need for a solution to the first problem ceased to exist as a result of the territorial losses and the population exchange policies. The population did not consist non-Moslem minorities enough to create a problem of social integration. Integration of the Moslem elements, on the other hand, became a very important and enduring problem throughout the modernization process of the Ottoman state and the Turkish Republic. About the efforts of integration, Mardin first underlines the pan-Islamism of the Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), who tried to establish a strong link between the center and the periphery by emphasizing the Moslem identity of both. These efforts, as Mardin states, achieved a very limited and partial unification.

The next attempt of unification came from the Young Turks (1908-1918), whose policies were in secular nature and consisted of “a policy of cultural and educational unification” (Mardin, 1973: 176). Mardin (1973: 177) explains their failure in unification with “[t]heir ineptitude and incipient nationalism”, which could not deal with “[l]ack of integration, demands for

decentralized administration, as well as provincial opposition to what were considered the secular ideas of the Young Turks” (Mardin, 1973: 177).

Mardin mentions two important developments at the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of which the local notables gained a certain degree of uniformity. First was the increasing presence of the state in the periphery in line with its centralization policies. This created a defensive attitude among the forces of the periphery. As the second development, market values began to prevail in various parts of Anatolia. Entering into similar economic activities with similar values ensured uniformity among these market actors.

Mardin (1973: 178) claims that with these new developments, the center-periphery opposition entered into a new phase, although it inherited elements of the old confrontation. After the middle of the nineteenth century, patronage and client relations became features of the structural transformation. Particularly, as Mardin (1973: 178) suggests, centralization policies of the state came up with a new set of rights and obligations for the people in the periphery, which also brought these people and the state in a much closer relation. In achieving this closer connection, the importance of the local notables increased as they stand between the state officials and the peripheral populations. Additionally, new economic activities and increasing complexity of the bureaucratic structure arising out of centralization policies provided local notables new sources of power in the periphery. Among these local notables, Mardin states, there were men of religion who were increasingly

getting closer to the periphery as a result of secularization policies of the center. Additionally, since men of religion had no economic basis of authority, they were in a position to continue their monopoly on culture and the system of values and symbols. Moreover, modern educational system could not achieve to integrate the periphery into the system. It reproduces the elite education without providing access to the provincial populations. As a result, “an Islamic, unifying dimension had again been added to the peripheral code” (Mardin, 1973: 178).

On the other hand, as a result of modernization in general and in the educational system in particular, the gap between the center and the periphery was widened. Here, Mardin’s emphasis is again on the cultural nature of this gap. On the one hand, periphery united around the ‘lower’ culture embodied by Islamic values and symbols, and on the other hand, center increasingly created its isolated ‘high’ culture of secular bureaucracy. As Mardin puts it, “the provincial world as a whole was now increasingly united by an Islamic opposition to secularism” and correspondingly, “the periphery was challenged by a new and intellectually more uncompromising type of bureaucrat” (Mardin, 1973: 179)

By employing a Weberian terminology, Mardin traces the changes and transformations in the bureaucratic structure during the nineteenth century. He argues, “the aspects of Ottoman bureaucracy that could be called ‘patrimonial’ or ‘sultanic’ were giving way to a ‘rational’ bureaucracy” (Mardin, 1973: 179).

This transformation had important repercussions on the center-periphery opposition, but not in terms of its elimination towards integration, rather in the way it was experienced. As a result of the modernization of the educational institutions where civil and military bureaucracy was trained, Mardin (1973: 180) points out, “a well-trained, knowledgeable bureaucratic elite guided by a view of the ‘interest of the state’” could be produced. In line with their modernizing and centralizing attempts, these reformist-rational bureaucrats preferred to establish a direct link between the state and citizens. Such a direct link, at least, bypassed the local notables, who were assumed to be the bridge between the center and the periphery. Their opposition, then, was related with their attempt to protect their status and power sources.

Another opposition of the period, Mardin underlines, was between the Sultan and the new bureaucratic class. The source of this opposition came from the fact that whereas the former tried to continue to make bureaucratic recruitment based on loyalty, the latter, in line with their rational character, supported the merit system as the basis of modern bureaucracy. On the part of bureaucratic class, this opposition gave way to an urge to distance from the Sultan and to establish a ‘national bureaucracy’. Together with this uneasiness about the Sultan, increasing effect of nationalist ideologies in the Empire and of positivism made these new bureaucratic cadres impatient about the establishment of the modern state. One important consequence of distance of bureaucracy from the Sultan and the Islamic element of the Sultanic rule was an increasing suspicion of bureaucracy to the local notables. As Mardin (1973:

181) puts, “following the Young Turk Revolution, the provincial notables seemed to [rational-national bureaucrats] much more evil than they had been for the traditional bureaucrats, or for early reformers.”

#### **4.3.4 The Republican Era and the Reproduction of the Center-Periphery Cleavage**

Mardin also explains the reflection of the center-periphery cleavage in the Grand National Assembly during the Turkish War of Independence. The group of provincial notables, known as the ‘Second Group’, defended decentralization and Islamist policies against Kemalists. Mardin (1973: 181) summarizes what ‘defending the people’ is meant for local notables and for Kemalists;

“both sides claimed to be working for the people but for the Second Group this expression had clear connotations of decentralization and economic and political liberalism, whereas for the Kemalist core it had undertones of plebiscitarian democracy and the state’s duty to eliminate intermediate groups.”

One of the most important characteristics of this opposition had to do with the issue of religion, which was becoming increasingly *the* battleground of the confrontation.

After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, two important and interrelated sources of reaction were initiated against the Kemalist project of building a modern nation state and a secular identity. The sources of reactions were the provincial primordial groups and religious reactionary movements. Kemalists themselves tried to apply important mechanisms to overcome these possibilities particularly cultural and linguistic reforms. However, one crucial channel for the mobilization of these peripheral forces could be via political parties. If any political party turns into a bearer of decentralization and religious demands of the peripheral forces, then it would help for the erosion of the secular and national character of the Republic. This reflex became a defining character of the Kemalist cadres and it marked their inability to construct a relation with the periphery. At this point, Mardin defines this reflex, i.e. being suspicious and defensive against the periphery, as the feature that the Republic inherited from the Ottoman state. And he also points out that the source of this reflex was bureaucracy. No matter there had been a change in the nature of bureaucracy from traditional to rational, what Mardin (1973: 183) puts as ‘the bureaucratic code’, which was “the center had to be strengthened – partly against the periphery – before everything else” was kept intact.

For Mardin, the problematic nature of the relation between Kemalists and the periphery came also from the formers inability to mobilize, and in turn integrate the peasantry to the system. Instead of finding the ways of mass mobilization, Kemalists chose to concentrate at the symbolic level and



creating the symbolic elements of the national identity. For Mardin, this attitude and inability to close the gap between center and periphery was also something common in Ottoman and Kemalist centers. Mardin (1973: 183) puts this commonality in the following way; “Integrating from the top down by imposing regulations had been the general approach behind Ottoman social engineering. The characteristic feature of Kemalism show that this view of society was still preeminent in the Kemalist program.” Having in mind the positivist and rationalist characteristic of Kemalist project, one should expect an increasing reliance on social engineering, rather than choosing mobilization of the peasantry for their integration. As Mardin puts, the new Republic chose to regulate masses instead of revolutionarize their positions within the system. As Mardin (1973: 184) puts, “the Kemalists had a fine understanding of *regulation*, but they missed the *revolutionary-mobilizational* aspect that, in certain contemporary schemes of modernization, mobilized masses for a restructuring of society.”<sup>4</sup> Kemalists tried to construct a national unity by ideological means without attempting to identify themselves with the periphery. Kemalists were unable to mobilize the masses for the social changes that they planned to make.<sup>5</sup> They keep the traditional suspicion towards the periphery. Provincial heterogeneity and the Islamic culture were accepted as the archaic left-overs of the Ottoman past. And that heterogeneity should be covered with national identity. Any policy or political party that

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<sup>4</sup> emphasis in original

<sup>5</sup> Meltem Ahiska (2006) finds this argument highly problematic. She claims that the same cadre, who was unable to mobilize masses as claimed by Mardin, successfully mobilized the population against non-Muslims in general, and during the 6-7 September events, in particular.

could help the resurgence of these archaic elements would be an obstacle to the Kemalist project of modernization. The periphery, again, should be regulated and shaped in such a way to fit the expectations of the center. All these characteristics of the Kemalist project, indeed, added new dimensions to the center-periphery confrontation. Rather than integrating themselves with the Republic, provincial populations saw the center distant and deaf to their needs, and the center sees their culture as archaic, backward and as an obstacle to modernization.

#### **4.3.5 Kemalism, Modernity and Nation-State**

In his analysis of the Kemalist program, Mardin mentions its historical roots and heritage that it carried from the previous attempts of modernization. He underlines ‘the bureaucratic code’, restoration of the power of the state and ensuring unity of the polity as the common and fixed concerns in the minds of the modernizing forces. Surely, the center-periphery cleavage and center’s suspicion towards the peripheral forces constituted one of the main characteristics of each attempt of modernization among which Kemalism is no exception. As many other scholars of Turkish political history also mention that westernization, or taking the Western developments as the model for healing the problems in Turkish society has not changed (Kadıoğlu, 1999 and Toker & Tekin, 2002). However, it is important to note that besides acknowledging the tradition that Kemalist modernizers inherited from the

modernization history, Mardin also underlines the innovative side of Kemalists that differentiates their modernization efforts from the past experiences. True, westernization has been the motto of the Turkish modernization. Tanzimat statesmen tried to adopt particular modern institutions to the Ottoman-Turkish polity without giving up the Ottoman ethos (Kadioğlu, 1999). Kemalism, on the other hand, developed the idea that the Western civilization should be taken as a totality with its culture, social and political institutions. Taking certain institutions as a model and leaving the culture, which cultivated those institutions aside, would not help the creation of a modern Turkey (Toker and Tekin, 2002: 39). This radicalization in the idea of westernization started to develop within the Young Turks movement and reached its maturity with Kemalism. Holistic understanding of the Western civilization had important consequences for the content and the scope of the modernization attempt. One of them is the development of the idea of the nation-state. And this idea became the main difference between the Kemalist program and the previous efforts of modernization. Mardin (1982: 208-209) even defines the main characteristic of Kemalism with reference to this point in the following way:

“Most Turkish and foreign scholars see the foundation of the Turkish Republic as the reorganization – albeit a radical reorganization – of a remnant of the Ottoman empire. In fact, the watershed appears not only in the radicalisation of the attitudes of the founding fathers of the Republic but in the very *conception of the Turkish Republic as a nation-state*. What happened was that Mustafa Kemal took up *a non-existent, hypothetical entity, the Turkish nation*, and breathed life into it. It is this ability to work for something which did not exist as if it existed, and to make it exist, which gives us the true dimensions of *the project* on which he had set out and which brings out the

utopian quality of his thinking. Neither the Turkish nation as the fountainhead of a 'general will' nor the Turkish nation as a source of national identity existed at the time he set out on this task."<sup>6</sup>

Kemalist 'conception of the Turkish Republic as a nation-state' which based its legitimacy on the existence of a 'non-existent, hypothetical entity, the Turkish nation' and the idea of the national-identity as the unifying force are those characteristics of the Kemalist program that a democratic critique should focus. Moreover, since all these new conceptions of the new state, society and identity did not exist at the time, Mardin states, Kemalism turned out to be 'a project' to take all these entities into existence. With this account, Mardin successfully underlines the mythic character of the people and the nation.

At this point, it would be informative to elaborate on these characteristics of the Kemalist modernization underlined by Mardin. For this purpose, the role of the state in this project, the conception of nation as a homogeneous society and of citizenship are to be discussed. As İnel (2001: 19) states, unitary state, unitary society and unitary identity have constituted the backbone of the Kemalist ideology. Those conceptions embody not only the political limits of the Kemalist project but also the Kemalist project's limitations imposed on the political.

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<sup>6</sup> emphasis is mine.

Keyman underlines the importance of defining Kemalism as ‘an act of conceptualization’. By this way, he (Keyman, 2005a: 21) states, it would be possible to understand Kemalism as a nation-state building project based on certain epistemological and normative axioms. At the epistemological level, Kemalism adopted positivist-rationalist perspective together with its universalism. This is also an essential consequence of accepting the western civilization as a whole. Modern civilization can be applied in every society no matter the cultural differences. This aculturalist and universalist perspective as the component of the positivist epistemology is based on the idea that the knowledge of the society for the sake of order and progress can be known as long as modern science and its methods are applied. In other words, ensuring order in a certain time, and also achieving progress in a given society is a matter of science and technicality. The telos of the progress is not a matter of discussion. It is the transformation from the traditional society to a modern one. The only problem is how to achieve this goal and it is a matter of the application of science. As an essential result of this epistemological outlook, society and social phenomena appear as something can be changed, reshaped, administered and manipulated. In other words, social change and development is a matter of social engineering.

This social engineering project is one of the components of, what Kadioğlu (1999) calls, the ‘republican epistemology’. For Kadioğlu, one characteristic of the Republican epistemology is the essentialist East/West differentiation, and the other one, as mentioned above, is the idea that society

can be shaped from a top-down intervention and construction of the society with a new identity by the state. This mentality defines the state as the sole architect of the new social construction. In turn, the whole modernization project based on the creation of a nation and national identity is attached to the nation-state. Any challenge to the modernization project would be a challenge to the state and its continuity. Thus, the Kemalist modernization project endowed with a reflex of closing the politics with the frame of the very project itself.

To evaluate from Rancière's perspective, Kemalist project can be described as a project of a police order, rather than project of politics. According to its conception of modern subject, identity, community, way of life and public/private distinction, Kemalism aims to transform the population. It is assumed that as a result of this transformation the population is able to 'fit' the project without any remainders. Although democracy and equality are the promises of the modernization, though for a later stage since the population is not ready yet, these promises function rather as a justification for the existing inequalities, particularly the one between elites and the masses. Again, if we recall Rancière's challenge to the idea of inequality between knowledge and ignorance, it can be argued that the assumption between modernizers, who have the knowledge, and the people, who are for the time being ignorant, arrived its inevitable conclusion, i.e. rediscovery of inequality, yet a modern one.

As a consequence of the essentialist nature of the republican epistemology, Islam could not be accepted as a bridge between the cultures of the center and the periphery. The cultures are accepted as essentially apart and it is not possible to reconcile them with each other. Then, as Kadioğlu mentions, parallel to Mardin, one of the most important consequences of the republican epistemology became an alienation of the center from the periphery. Not only center started to see the periphery essentially different and needs to be transformed by the center/state, but also periphery increased its reaction against the center. Because center and its culture is accepted as an imposition, periphery is increasingly attached the center with the unjust and its own culture with just (Kadioğlu, 1999: 3).

As Keyman suggests at the intersection of the conceptualization of the nation-state and the epistemological axioms, we find the state at the center of the project which is the only agent that can realize this project. The state and its rational-technical bureaucrats, which have been accepted as the only rational class in the society, can do this social-engineering project. As a consequence, legal-rational authority, positivist and rationalist conception of science, definition of citizen with reference to its responsibilities to the state – eventually to the modernity project – and foremost the idea of the state as the ethical and political subject was emerged. State is accepted as the only subject of the modernization whereas society and the citizen are the objects of the project. (Keyman, 2005b:47)

The normative and political priority of the nation-state, and the idea that the state is the modernizing force for the society has important repercussions for the political life and thought. Foremost, Kemalism turned out to be the boundary of the political life. As a result of the equalization of modernization project with the nation-state, Kemalism became the definition for both at the very same time. As Köker (2001: 97-98) explains, Kemalism becomes the main reason behind the existence of the nation-state. Consequently, Kemalism has been the *raison d'Etat*.

When it is evaluated in terms of the positivist-rationalistic epistemology and the political and normative priority it gives to the state, as Toker and Tekin (2002: 84) points out, Kemalism developed a positivist-authoritarian governmentality which reduces politics into a social technique applied upon the society to produce a certain social order and to control the society. Politics is not accepted as an activity of participation, let alone an act of dissensus, but as a rational technique of administration, where public, political action in the public sphere and citizen as a political actor become meaningless. Toker and Tekin also underline an important result of this understanding of politics. It is that, public is defined as an administrative sphere limited with the state which monopolizes the definition of the general will, rather than accepted as a political sphere where the general will would be the product of the political actions of the citizens.



The closure of the political sphere to differences is strengthened by the idea of being a nation as a homogeneous entity. This is also a very important part of the Kemalist nationalist project. Kemalism reacted against the public presence of religious and ethnic identities, and social classes as being threat to the nation-making project. Since the existence of the homogeneous nation and national identity were attached to the security and power of the state, any such presence was accepted as a threat against the nation-state, and in turn to the whole modernization project. (İnsel, 2001: 18-19) This is the inevitable consequence of the fact that the state has been the main and the sole agent of the project. Any threat against one would be interpreted as a threat to the other. The aspiration of nation-state, national identity and nation as a homogeneous society as the backbones of the Kemalist modernist project resulted with the settlement of practices of exclusion and closing the political to make this exclusion possible.

From the perspective of the center-periphery model of Mardin, the characteristic of the Kemalist program mentioned above can be evaluated, particularly, as a result of his critical position to the positivist perspective. On the other hand, Mardin's model comes also with its limitations particularly in terms of showing the anti-political consequences of the Kemalist project which are discussed briefly above. Instead of registering the Kemalist project as anti-political and showing its failure in ensuring the permanent openness of the political sphere, Mardin tends to put the problem as a question of social integration and cultural alienation. However, an understanding of democracy

with a corresponding idea of the political with a pluralist ethos needs to be on the alert against the closure of politics. In turn, such an understanding necessitates the development of the idea that any social integration, whatsoever, comes up with its own remainders and exclusionary practices.

#### **4.3.6 The Multi-Party Period**

In his evaluation of the Democratic Party (DP) experience, Mardin identifies DP with the interests and culture of the periphery. On the contrary to the ignorance of the Republican People's Party (RPP) to the populations of the periphery and its increasing distance with them, DP became the voice of the periphery. DP promised "to bring service to the peasants, their problems as legitimate issues of politics, debureaucratize Turkey and liberalize religious practices" (Mardin, 1973: 184). Mardin underlines that DP became the source for the periphery in gaining their self-confidence and self-esteem which was lost with the attitude of the center towards them. For Mardin (1973: 185), DP succeeded to be representative of the periphery especially in terms of its "appeal to Islam as the culture of the periphery." DP, as Mardin (1973: 185) suggests, "relegitimized Islam and traditional rural values". It seems possible to argue that, for Mardin, the multi-party experiences in Turkey, most obviously in the emergence of DP, the political parties had been shaped by the center-periphery confrontation. Mardin (1973: 186) himself states that "there were very good reasons to claim that the Republican People's Party

represented the ‘bureaucratic’ center, whereas the Democrat Party represented the ‘democratic’ periphery.”

In terms of the center-periphery relations, the coup d’Etat of May 27, 1960 did nothing but reproduce and deepen the confrontation. After this intervention of the central forces to the rise of the peripheral force, for Mardin, the Kemalist cadres became the representative of status quo and resistance to change, whereas the peripheral forces turned out to be “the real party of movement” which aspired for change. With the military intervention, Kemalist ideology and the ideal of democracy separated to different sides. Throughout the first fifty years of Turkish Republic, especially with two military interventions, the center-periphery cleavage has been deepened and perpetuated to be “one of [Turkish politics’] extremely important structural components” (Mardin, 1973: 187)

The backbone of Mardin’s analysis is that the center-periphery opposition embodies the paradox of the history of Ottoman-Turkish modernization. The relation between the center and the periphery has been in antagonistic nature. This confrontation makes the development of the modern nation-state in Turkey different than the European experiences. In terms of the discussion about the evaluation of Turkish Republic as a rupture from, or a continuity of the Ottoman heritage, Mardin seems to give important explanation for both ways. On the one hand, especially with its national characteristic of the Republic, it is a rupture from its Ottoman past. On the

other hand, having inherited a fundamental characteristic of the Ottoman state, the Republic represents a continuity. That Ottoman heritage is the center-periphery confrontation.

In the discussion below, the center-periphery paradigm is critically analyzed in order to show the problems and limitations it engenders to grasp the main problems of Turkish democracy. In line with the main theoretical standpoint and question of this study, I try to disclose the weakness of center-periphery dichotomy in providing the necessary perspective to understand the problem of the closure of political with its multiplicity and variety. For doing this, first I question Mardin's understanding of the periphery; second, I try to show the center-periphery paradigm's inability in explaining different forms of closure by defining one type of struggle as the explanatory narrative of Turkish politics; third, his reductionist perspective in his conception of politics; and lastly, his conception of social integration is critically analyzed.

#### **4.4 1980s and Today**

The period between 1960 to 1980 was witnessed important ups and downs in the political life in Turkey. Three military interventions, proliferation of political parties and civil societal organizations were among the important changes in the political system. Apart from the changes that took place in the political structure of Turkey, center-periphery model has been applied to

explain these developments. Military interventions are generally accepted as the intervention of the center against the increasing power of the peripheral elements in order to restore its own power. Proliferation of the political parties and appearance of the civil societal organizations were the attempts of the periphery to challenge the status quo and the strength of the center. Thus, even the actors and components of the center and the periphery have changed to a certain degree the main cleavage and opposition remained (Gönenç, 2006).

1980s and afterwards became the resurgence of the two fears of the Kemalist regime: Kurdish movement and Islamic movement. These have been the most important components of the periphery in the sense of being more powerful in their capacity to challenge the Kemalist center. From the perspective of the Kemalist center, Kurdish identity and Islamic identity have been evaluated as a challenge to nationalism and secularism, respectively. As I discussed in the third chapter and in this chapter, nationalism and secularism have been the backbone of the Kemalist regime. Thus, the appearance of these two movements is accepted as threat against the fundamentals of the regime and of the secular nation-state itself.

In line with the center-periphery model, the political events and turmoils after the 1980s were the strategic maneuvers of the center to respond these fundamental challenges. Evaluating the Kurdish issue on the basis of security issue and accepting it as terrorist separatist activity, trying to manipulate and control the civil society to prevent the discussion of Kurdish

issue in relation to democracy, rights and liberties, and closing the political parties which were accepted as the political arm of the Kurdish separatism can be counted among the responses that the Kemalist center gave to the Kurdish question.

On the other hand, the Islamic identity and political Islam became increasingly powerful and found important place in the political life. As Keyman (2004: 216) points out, since the 1990s, Turkey witnessed “the rise of Islam politically, economically and culturally.” The Welfare Party became a part of the coalition government and the success of the political Islam continued as the last instance of it is the single-party government of the Justice and Development Party. Islam also became one of the most powerful component of the economic system and it also appeared as an identity claim and demanded recognition from the Kemalist regime. The most important response of the Kemalist center against this resurgence of Islam came with the so-called ‘post-modern military coup’ of the February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1997, which brought the government’s downfall. Later, the Constitutional Court outlawed the Welfare Party in January 1998 and closed the Virtue Party, as its successor, on the same grounds. Within the center-periphery model, it may be argued that the Constitutional Court acted as the institution of the center and gave the necessary responses to the peripheral forces without causing the suspension of the rule of law and the parliamentary system. As one of the last cases, the decision of the Court about the presidential elections is also evaluated in terms of the center-periphery opposition.

The political developments of after the 1980s were analyzed also without employing the center-periphery model. It is argued that parallel to the socio-economic changes taken place in Turkey, new areas of struggle came into existence which cannot be understood by forcing them into the center-periphery cleavage (Sunar and Sayarı, 2004). It is also argued that the center-periphery model not only lost its explanatory force for the 1980s and 1990s but also it has serious problems from the beginning in explaining the main dynamics of Turkish political life (Çınar, 2006). Nevertheless, as Fethi Açıkel points out, the center-periphery model reached a paradigmatic level with the 1980s. Açıkel underlines four reasons for this increasing importance of the model. First is the differentiation of the political elites among themselves and their participation to the democratization processes by different ways. Second is the emergence of a rightist intelligentsia who are close to the Weberian analysis, which is used by Mardin in his center-periphery model. In other words, Mardin's Weberian approach has been the reason of attention. By employing the center-periphery model, they not only can criticize the exclusion of the Islamic tradition with the terms of democracy but also they can do their critique without using the Marxist analysis. Third reason is parallel to the widespread critique of positivism. As the main component of the Kemalist modernist project, such a critique indirectly creates an opportunity to problematize the Kemalist center and its authoritarian reflexes. Final reason, for Açıkel, is that the liberal left-leaned intelligentsia has developed a critical position against the idea of bureaucracy and state based

on Universalist reason. Here, the identity politics became one of the important sources of the development of such a position. (Açikel, 2006)

#### **4.5 Periphery as a Monolithic Entity**

In his analysis, Mardin mentions the heterogeneity of the periphery compared to the unitary and singularity of the center and its culture. However, his center-periphery duality seems to be established by ignoring this heterogeneity. It is evident that Mardin's conception of periphery is related with his main assumption that 'society has a center'. That is to say, various different cultures, identities and values and beliefs which have been existed in the society share the common position of being outside the center. Depending on this common location in the society, they are collected under the totalizing title of periphery.

The monolithic conception of the periphery in relation to the center comes up with a reductionist perspective when Mardin starts to present Islam as *the* culture of the periphery. Particularly in his discussion on the Democrat Party experience, he finds the power of DP in his successful appeal to Islam. At this point, Mardin points out one religion among others as the representative of the periphery. It seems this is an inevitable price to pay, as long as one tries to understand and explain a heterogeneous structure of a society and multi-dimensional power relations by employing a duality. A



particular religious belief and related traditional values are registered as one side of the dual political struggle, whereas other elements of the same heterogeneous society are omitted by keeping outside the main political opposition.

Besides the cultural differences in the society, Mardin's monolithic conception ignores another difference in the society. If we still use Mardin's terminology, it is obscure in his analysis the difference between periphery as peasant and periphery as local notables. That difference, however, would help us to see many different moments of exclusion, differences in life-styles between peasants and landlords – which create an important difference from a Weberian perspective, let alone Marxist one – and various power relations which are not necessarily related with the state. It seems possible to argue that, with the center-periphery opposition, Mardin depoliticizes many cultural and class differences, because only one type of opposition which based on culture, and only one particular culture, which is Islamic culture can reach to the status of the party against the center in the political struggle and to the status of the periphery in Mardin's narration.

## **4.6 Authoritarian-Bureaucratic Center vs. Democratic Populist**

### **Periphery**

Another important problem arises with the center-periphery analysis is related with the democratic character attached by Mardin to the peripheral forces. Especially, in Mardin's analysis, about the Republican period, as Açıkel argues, Mardin defines 'Kemalist power' and 'Islamic opposition' as the founding duality of Turkish modernization. Further, this duality follows with the attachment of the former with 'authoritarian state' and the latter with 'democratic populist mass' ideal types. (Açıkel, 2006: 33) Similarly, for Mardin, after the military intervention in 1960, Kemalist ideology became to represent the conservative side, whereas, the Democrat Party's tradition represents the change and resistant to the status quo.

The center-periphery paradigm, because of the authoritarian center and excluded periphery construction, enables the evaluation of every challenge of the periphery to the center as instances of liberalization and democratization without making further assessment about the content of the movement coming from the peripheral forces. Such an automatic attachment of the adjective 'democratic' conceals the exclusionary practices embedded in the traditional values and religious practices. To put it in a different way, trying to read the power relations in the society limited with center-periphery opposition prevents the politicization of conflict and confrontations in the society between what Mardin labels as the elements of the periphery.

Anti-democratic and anti-political practices in the society are not always related with the state, bureaucracy and founding ideology. The assumption that society has a center seems to follow another one that is society has only one type of exclusion and struggle that is between center and periphery. Many different sources and practices of oppression, inequality, exclusion and mechanisms of homogenization cannot find a place within center-periphery model.

As a consequence of this problem, through the lens of the center-periphery paradigm, one of the most important blindspots that we are not able to see is the different instances of closure of the political and intolerance to dissent and resistance embedded within the society, between different cultures, beliefs and identities. This creates much more vital problem when Mardin evaluates Turkish politics after 1960 by giving Islam as a fundamental role in representing periphery. DP tradition on the one hand, and also political Islam gain a taken-for-granted democratic status just because they are supposed to represent the periphery and traditional values which are excluded by the center. Since politics is defined as one-dimensional and reduced to a struggle between two oppositional sides, being against the authoritarian center is a necessary feature to be accepted as liberal and democrat without making any further evaluation about the content and direction of the challenge these forces represent. In the final analysis, it seems possible to argue that as long as the concepts of center and periphery is employed to picture the

authoritarian/democratic or conservative/liberal forces in a society, the plurality and multi-dimensionality of political struggles and anti-political closures can not be understood. Then, it is important to challenge the starting assumption of Mardin in the first place. Does society has a center?

The center-periphery argument also ignores the possible cooperations between the center and the periphery. Rather than compromises and integrations, conflict and antagonist relation has marked the Turkish center with its periphery. Here, another one-dimensional analysis comes into question. Particularly throughout the history of Turkish Republic, it is possible to register a number of issues, which has been the source of cooperation between Mardin's central and peripheral forces. The conditions of non-Moslem minorities, the development of Turkish nationalism and the utilization of the Islamic values by the state, the anti-communist mobilization of the masses, Turk-Islam synthesis which was employed for depoliticization and taming the populations after 1980 military intervention, and also neo-liberal economic policies. It seems difficult to understand all these issues with reference to the center-periphery duality.

The opposition between center and periphery may be analyzed as a struggle not between bureaucratic elite culture and the culture of the people, but as a struggle between the parties within the ruling bloc. In their own ways both sides try to secure and expand its own hegemony. The hegemony of the founding ideology has given priority to the aim of securing the state. For the

sake of this aim, individual rights and freedoms, recognition demands of various identities and permanent openness of political space and critique have been easily sacrificed. On the other hand, the hegemony of the Sunni Islam in the moral sphere may bring about its own police order with the aim of consolidation its own conception of subject, identity and community. The important thing here is to acknowledge the plurality of the sources, which closes political space and displaces politics.

As an attempt to create ‘a rift in the subjectivity’ to use Honig’s words (Honig, 1993:206) of the Kemalist project, a rift in the authoritarian impulse in Turkish modernity, the peripheral challenge might appear as a source of democratization. Yet, without answering the following question, it would be misleading to decide the nature of the challenge and its possible consequences for a democratic life. The question is: what would be their response to a same kind of rift in the subjectivity, identity and community they want to consolidate?

Resisting to an authoritarian regime does not necessarily make a movement, an identity, a group or an event democratic. It might very well be aiming for another form of police order with different mechanisms of the closure of the political.

#### **4.7 Consensual Social Integration as the Aim of Politics**

The most important consequence of this on-going cleavage for Mardin is the failure in social integration. Mardin registers this lack of social integration also as the vital problem in Turkish modernization and the difference of the development of modern nation-state in Turkey compared to the Western experience.

Mardin not only gives priority to social integration but also he defines the possibility of social integration on a consensual basis. Then, the lack of compromise and consensus become the vital source of the failure in reaching the aim of social integration. As a consequence of this perspective, the development of democratic politics depends on the historical development of mechanism for compromise, consensus and in turn social integration. The aim of politics is reduced to integration and compromise.

## CHAPTER V

**METIN HEPER:**

### **THE STATE TRADITION AND RATIONAL DEMOCRACY**

Harmony and inner  
consensus come with death,  
when human faces no longer  
expresses conflicts but are  
immobile, composed, at rest.  
Stuart Hampshire

In this chapter, I will critically evaluate Metin Heper and his analysis of state and democracy in Turkey. The main concern of the chapter is to problematize Heper's analysis on the state tradition in Turkey and the conclusions he reaches about the political life and the experience of democracy in Turkey. In his analysis, Heper applies a state-centered approach moving from the claim that Turkish political life and problems of its democracy can only be understood by locating the development of state at the center of investigation. Therefore, before discussing Heper's analysis, I first outline the main framework and central concepts of the state-centered approach. Second, I present Heper's arguments as he develops in his book *The State Tradition in Turkey* (1985a). In the third part, I discuss Heper's writings

about the consolidation of democracy question. His analysis in these works would show us the limitations of the duality he constructs in his analysis. In the last part, I problematize his ‘dual thinking’ and his conception of rational democracy in line with the main question of the dissertation, that is, the closure of the political as a problem of democracy.

### **5.1 Metin Heper: A Short Biography**

Metin Heper was born in 1940. He graduated from Istanbul University Department of Law in 1963. Then, he went to U.S.A. for his graduate studies and earned M.P.A. degree in 1968 and Ph.D. on public administration in 1970 at Syracuse University. After his graduation, he worked as a faculty member at Middle East Technical University (1970-74), Bogazici University (1974-88) and at Bilkent University until today. In addition to the positions he held in Turkey, Heper has also been an acknowledged scholar in foreign academic community. As a visiting professor and research scholar, Heper has been at Harvard University (1977-78), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1979-1980), University of Connecticut (1981-1982), University of Manchester (1986-1987), Princeton University (1995-1996) and Brandeis University (2003-2004). Heper is one of the founding members of the Turkish Academy of Sciences. During his career, he also held administrative position in the universities.



Heper mentions that the academic and administrative experiences he had during his career give him the opportunity to compare different institutions in terms of the relation between decision-making procedures, education mentality, institutional cultures and the structure of thought of scholar and administrators (Heper, 2002a: 50). Through this comparison between institutions and mentalities, Heper also reaches conclusions regarding the problems of social sciences in Turkey. His evaluations and conclusions might give a sense of his understanding of the right way of conducting scientific study and his general methodology.

Starting from his early years of education, he encountered with a number of dualities between different mentalities in different institutions at different levels. Education as 'memorizing by heart vs. thinking, description vs. analysis, and ideological stalemates vs. rational administration. In his years of secondary education in Harlow College, Essex, England, Heper saw the difference between memorizing and thinking. Only through thinking and questioning, mere description of empiric realities can be overcome and replaced by analysis of relations and interactions between these realities. And for him, this would be the way that a social scientist should approach her subject of study.

During his academic career and especially in his administrative duties, Heper found out the main problem of social sciences in Turkey; prevalence of ideological and normative approaches. For Heper, the manifestation of this

problem can be seen not only in academic studies, but also in administrative affairs. Instead of using statistical data, empirical research and analytical method in investigating social phenomena, ideological positions are defended no matter what reality says. As Heper notes, then, the main problem of social sciences in Turkey comes from its normative character and ideological engagements of scholars. Heper notes that his encounter between ideological attitude and rational minds affects the way he thinks about the proper way of doing social sciences. To put it differently, positivist division between ‘is’ and ‘ought’ seems to be embodied in Heper’s own experiences.

In Heper’s works, the central issues have been public administration, decision-making processes and the development of the state and bureaucracy in Turkey, the relation between military and democracy, the role of religion in Turkish political life, political parties and party leaders. Although there have been different concepts and problems, the phenomenon of the state constitutes the backbone of Heper’s writings. Indeed, as Özman and Coşar (2001: 82) underlines, the importance and originality of Heper comes from the fact that he has been the most influential practitioner of state-centered approach in Turkish political science literature.

## **5.2 Theoretical Framework of the State-Centered Approach**

In his analysis on the state tradition in Turkey, Heper applies the state-centered approach in explaining the history and nature of Turkish politics. To

understand Heper's position and his analysis, it would be necessary to outline the framework and main arguments of the state-centered approach in comparative and historical studies in political science. In the following discussion, it is not aimed to cover all different approaches and positions within the state-centered analysis, which is far from having a unitary and undisputed methodology and theory (Skocpol, 1985: 3). In line the main purpose of the chapter, I limit the discussion with the theories and scholars to whom Heper relies on in his analysis of state tradition in Turkey. In so doing, mainly I focus on J.P.Nettl, Badie and Birnbaum, and Berki. By this way, it would be possible to understand the concepts and categorizations that Heper uses.

In her prominent essay, "Bringing the State Back In", Theda Skocpol underlines an existing tendency of taking states as subjects of study in 1980s in various different areas of social sciences. For Skocpol, these different works informed a coming, what she calls, sea change in comparative studies. As she puts, 'brining the state back in' is more than an increasing emphasis on states, but it 'implies a paradigmatic shift' in comparative political science (Skocpol, 1985: 4).

State-centered parading has developed as a challenge to the pluralist and structural functionalist paradigms on the one hand, and neo-Marxist analysis on the other (Skocpol, 1985: 5-6; Almond, 1988). Neither these paradigms give adequate attention to the "explanatory centrality of states as

potent and autonomous organizational actors” (Skocpol, 1985: 6). The pluralist and structure functionalists, as society-centered approaches do not conceptualize state or government as an independent actor, rather they accept it as an arena for bargaining among interest groups in order to influence public policy decisions for maximizing their interests. Neo-Marxists, on the other hand, accept the importance of the state. Yet, they conceptualize state as being shaped by the class struggle and its function is dependent on the permanency of an existing mode of production and class relations. Furthermore, Skocpol argues, since Marxist analysis differentiates states in terms of the mode of production or the level of capitalist development; it becomes inadequate in making comparative analysis. Skocpol (1985: 20) claims, “bringing the state back in to a central place in analyses of policy making and social change does require a break with some of the most encompassing social-determinist assumptions of pluralism, structural-functional developmentalism, and the various neo-Marxisms.”

State-centered approach in comparative and historical studies came up with such a claim of paradigmatic shift in order to make the state as a central explanatory variable. In state-centered approach, the state is accepted as an independent and autonomous social actor. State’s autonomy comes from its capacity to formulate and implement public policies independent from other social actors, and also to initiate social changes. Complementary to state’s capacity as an actor, Skocpol (1985: 27) underlines the centrality of the state as an “institutional structure with effect in politics.” From this perspective, as

Skocpol calls Tocquevillian approach, the aim is to explain the sociopolitical impact of the state. In other words, the assumption is that states, with their institutional structures, traditions and patterns of activity “influence the meanings and methods of politics for all organization and action that influence the meanings and methods of politics for all groups and classes in society” (Skocpol, 1985: 27-28)

Although Heper draws on Skocpol’s ideas in his later works, J.P. Nettl is more influential in Heper’s analysis of state tradition in Turkey. In his pioneering article, Nettl criticized ‘the abandonment of the state’ in social sciences. Although Almond claims that Nettl’s criticism does not go more than a call for increase in emphasis instead of a paradigmatic shift, he may be accepted as presenting a blueprint for a state-centered analysis (Almond, 1988: 856).

According to Nettl, the state should be taken as a quantitative variable in social sciences. By this way only, “significant differences and discontinuities between societies” can be explained and “systematically qualitative or even quantitative distinctions” can be made (Nettl, 1968: 562). In other words, “the varying empirical reality” of different societies, in this approach, is supposed to be explained in terms of the different historical developments of the state, the degree of autonomy and sovereignty of the state vis-à-vis other social actors. To use Nettl’s terminology, the criterion of

comparison of different societies becomes the degree of ‘stateness’ in each empirical case (Nettl, 1968: 591).

In Nettl’s account, the state is defined as autonomous and independent vis-à-vis other social actors and collectivities. It has the capacity to determine the general interest and aim of the society, and also the political culture of a given society. Accordingly, the degree of stateness depends upon “the extent to which the major goals for society are designated and safeguarded by the state, independent of civil society” (Heper, 1985b: 86)

The independence and autonomy of the state, or stateness, to follow Nettl’s terminology, differs according to place and time. In other words, there are different degrees of stateness in different societies, or in different times of the same society. Therefore, in Nettl’s account, the major comparison between societies can be made in terms of their degrees of stateness. Since the state is given an autonomous and determinant status in the society, “[t]his analysis therefore suggests that the variable development of stateness in different societies is a crucial factor in specifying the nature of those societies’ politics” (Nettl, 1968: 588).

Nettl (1968: 566) points out three ways in making this analysis and determining the level of stateness in a given society.

One is historical: Is there a historical tradition in any particular society for the existence, primacy, autonomy, and sovereignty

of a state? Another is intellectual: Do the political ideas and theories of the society past or present incorporate a notion of state, and what role do they assign to it? Yet another approach is cultural: to what extent have individuals generalized the concept and cognition of state in their perceptions and actions, and to what extent are such cognitions salient?

Analyzing the historical, intellectual, cultural traditions in a society, it is aimed to understand its degree of stateness, which in turn, gives us the nature of the polity in that society.

Bertrand Badie and Pierre Birnbaum provide another important theoretical framework for state-centered approach in general, and for Heper in particular. Their main objection to the existing ways of studying the state in their times is their omission of the historical dimension. For them, the only proper way to study the state is making it the subject of study of sociology and studying it through a historical approach. It is because, Badie and Birnbaum (1983) argue, the state is ‘a social fact’ and ‘an actor’, which has its own historical development and has a capacity to effect the historical development of its society. Therefore, studying “the evolution of the state as an actor in the social system” gives us the differences between societies and explains their diversity.

The development of state in the West, for Badie and Birnbaum, is very much related with the emergence of social differentiation and as its consequence the problem of societal coordination. Although the state has solved the coordination problem, it has not been the only social device. Civil

society has had the capacity to solve this problem on its own. Here, Badie and Birnbaum introduce their one of the main distinctions; between the state and political center. For them, coordination can be achieved by the state or by a political center. In one case, the state dominates civil society through a powerful bureaucracy, in the other case, civil society develops, organizes itself and keeps the state weak.

According to the development of the state and political center vis-à-vis each other, Badie and Birnbaum defines their strong state/weak state typology. Strong state, or as they put, “the true state is one that has achieved a certain level of differentiation, autonomy, universality, and institutionalization.” (Badie and Birnbaum, 1983: 60) Weak states, on the other hand, is in question where coordination is achieved by the presence of political center. In line with this typology, Badie and Birnbaum defines United State and Great Britain as the examples of weak state with a political center; Italy as an example of strong state without a political center; and Switzerland has neither state nor political center. In this typology, the example for “true state” is France. For Badie and Birnbaum, French case was developed as an isomorphism of state and political center.

One of the main postulates of state-centered approach is the separation of state and society. The premise is that the notions of state and society designate two different realities. It seems state/society duality, inevitably,



constitutes one of the foundational assumption for an approach, which gives the state autonomy and independence from other social formations.

The duality constructed between state and society is the main starting point in R.N.Berki's ideas. Yet, his objection is to study a socio-political order based on descriptive features of state and society without investigating the relationship between their developments. State/society duality, in his view, does not mean that their formations are unrelated. The proper way to examine socio-political orders is "to extend our perspective from the plane of institutional structures such as states and social formations to the cultural attitudes and political philosophies lying behind them and, *ex hypothesi*, explaining their relationship as well as their respective strengths and weaknesses" (Berki, 1979: 2)

With reference to modern political thought and political consciousness, Berki (1979: 2) underlines the development of state and society as "the institutional counterpart of two opposed philosophies of man as member of the human community". They represent two "antithesis of modern political thought". Accordingly, Berki defines these two antithetical orientations as 'transcendentalism' (statist orientation), and 'instrumentalism' (societal orientation).

According to transcendentalism, human being “primarily belongs to a *moral community*”<sup>1</sup>, which is “prior to its member” (Berki, 1979: 2-3). The existence of the individual, in other words, is meaningful only as being part of this moral community. The members of this moral community internalize the common interest and goals. Berki importantly underlines that this common interest does not amount to the aggregation of the interest of its individual members. On the contrary, the community has its own ontological existence, essential aims and interests, different than and above the partial interests of individuals. Transcendentalist attitude accepts law “as the expression of the collective reason and will of the membership” and politics as “the conduct of the common affairs of the association, its ongoing business” (Berki, 1979: 3). In such an understanding, what is important is the duty of members to the community.

Instrumentalism, on the other hand, accepts human beings as part of “an *interest community*”<sup>2</sup> (Berki, 1979: 3). Individuals have their moral views, interests, and goals different and external from the community, whose existence depends on the contractual agreement of the individuals. Law, in instrumentalism, amount to “a necessary concomitant to as well as a compromise with the pursuit of private aims”, and politics means “the adjustment of private pursuit and the reconciliation of various interests” (Berki, 1979: 3). Here, contrary to the importance of duty, rights of members, their freedoms, and instead of uniformity, diversity gain priority.

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<sup>1</sup> emphasis in the original

Although these two orientations are characterized as the antithesis of one another, Berki points out their similarities. Foremost, for him, both attitudes are democratic in the sense of accepting the people as the source of authority. However, they, again, differ in terms of their understanding of the people. In the case of transcendentalism democracy is related with unified will of the community and mobilization towards common goals. Whereas, in instrumentalism, democracy is the rational aggregation of individual interests. As Berki (1979: 4) puts, “transcendentalism places more emphasis on ‘sovereignty’, whereas instrumentalism accentuates the contractual basis of government.”<sup>3</sup>

According to Berki, transcendentalism and instrumentalism are also “essentially interrelated and complementary”. In the European political history, a combination of these two attitudes was aimed. Therefore, Berki points out not only pure or extreme forms of but also moderate forms of these attitudes. For the analysis of socio-political orders, Berki provides a continuum between extreme forms of transcendentalism and instrumentalism. Each empirical case can be evaluated in between these two poles in terms of the relational development of society and state.

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<sup>2</sup> emphasis in the original

<sup>3</sup> Berki’s argument about the democratic content of both orientations also has its reflection in Heper’s thesis on Turkish politics. In a similar way to Berki, instead of ruling out one

### **5.3 The State Tradition in Turkey**

In line with the state-centered approach, Heper developed his analysis of Turkish politics on the basis of the premise that the development and nature of the Ottoman-Turkish polity can be understood around the phenomenon of the state in terms of its historical development. He attempts to show that Ottoman-Turkish polity is the best example of transcendentalism with a strong state tradition. The political culture in Turkey, therefore, has been shaped under the effect of this strong state. In the following part, I present Heper's argument on the state tradition of Turkey and various stages of its development.

#### **5.3.1 Transcendental State as the Ottoman Legacy**

As it is mentioned above, Heper's main analysis does not aim for showing and explaining ruptures, revolutionary changes, or discontinuities in the political history of a society. On the contrary, his thesis on the strong state tradition in Turkey is based on the idea of continuity of a certain pattern and quality of the institutional state structure in the Ottoman-Turkish polity with its inherited patterns, tendencies, reflexes, fears and basic oppositions, which have been

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orientation undemocratic and accepting the other essentially democratic, Heper constructs

defining the nature of the political relations. Therefore, understanding the emergence and development of the Ottoman state and its institutional features amounts to understanding the development of the state tradition, which still keeps, as Heper claims, its defining power in the political life in Turkey.

About the initial development of the Ottoman state and its Classical period, Heper underlines two interrelated issues, which became constitutive for the state tradition. First point is related with the sources of powers and threats against the development of central authority, that is, certain centrifugal and disintegrative forces. The second point is about the institutional state structure and the development of a traditional pattern of ruling. The latter, it seems, was developed as a result of the aim of overcoming the first one. That is to say, in order to establish and secure the central authority, the Ottoman rulers developed certain mechanisms and institutions, which enabled them to deal with disintegrative forces and demands.

From its initial period to its Classical age, as Heper mentions, the tension between center and periphery had become the basic opposition in the Ottoman polity. The Ottoman rulers established their rule and central authority at the expense of the local notables as the old Ottoman aristocracy and later its predecessors. Heper argues that the Ottoman rulers were very much successful in dealing with peripheral forces, yet the conflict between these two has never been solved once and for all. The peripheral forces, he

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his argument on the necessity of both orientations for a stable democratic order.

argues, have always waited for the weakest condition of the center to undermine its authority and superior position. In turn, this always-being-ready-to-undermine feature of peripheral forces reinforced center's suspicious against them. As we will see, this center-periphery opposition, in Heper's analysis, becomes the main framework that shapes the state tradition, the nature of the political actors and relations of the Ottoman-Turkish polity until today. As it is mentioned above, institutional character of the Ottoman state was developed in order to suppress peripheral forces and rule out their power in political and economic spheres. Another problem in front of central authority was heterogeneous social structure. Different religious communities, brotherhoods and local guilds, which were well-organized and semi-autonomous entities, made difficult for the Ottoman rulers to govern the society from the center. The components of this heterogeneity together with local lords and notables, who were always seeking to enhance their power and autonomy against the central authority were the embodiments of disintegrative and centrifugal forces. Besides these internal dynamics, the Ottoman state had always struggled with external enemies, which in a way constituted another disintegrative force for the Empire. Therefore, as Heper (1985a: 24) mentions, the Ottoman ruling acquired the permanent alert for its security as its state character. "The fear of disintegrative influences was the leitmotiv of Ottoman statemanship for a long time."

Within the framework of center-periphery opposition, the Ottoman state had developed with certain institutional capacities, which would be

accepted as responses for suppressing peripheral disintegrative forces. For Heper, as developed its highest level in the Classical age between the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, this institutional state structure and tradition of ruling was, on the one hand, the distinguishing feature of the Ottoman Empire, and on the other, it became what has been inherited as the state tradition in Turkey. As Heper points out, the Ottoman state was able to establish a strong central authority and made periphery dependent to itself via certain way of recruitment and training of state bureaucrats and household staff, its land regime, the development of a 'secular and state-oriented' tradition of governing, and the relative independence of the state from religion.

As Heper explains, one of the mechanisms behind the success of centralization of authority was related with the recruitment and training of bureaucrats and all other servants and household staff. For every kind of posts in the state system, the Ottoman rulers relied on loyal slaves, rather than enabling these posts to local notables and lords. Those loyal slaves as the servants of the Sultan were trained and socialized only with the state oriented norms. By this way center ensured at least two things. First, local aristocracy could not maintain any critical position within the central authority in order to perceive their own interests and became, as Heper underlines, dependent to the center. Second, through a closed socialization and education of the state servants and bureaucrats, they became unrelated with any social group. It seems possible to argue that, their personal interest and the interest of the state became identical. Bureaucracy, by this way, started to become a social

class with a different culture than any group in the society. In other words, bureaucracy was successfully alienated from the society for the sake of a strong state as a central authority.

Although the Ottoman state seemed to establish its central authority successfully through a certain institutional structure, a bureaucratic class separated from society and a strong military, neither military power nor central authority could be possible without a parallel and complementary economic system. To put it simply, institutional structures would not be possible to produce the intended consequences without having sufficient revenue supporting them. In the Ottoman case, as Heper argues, the land regime, namely fief system, or *timar* system, as the basis of Ottoman's economic structure, fulfilled the necessary function in providing revenue without making political compromises in the center-periphery relations. In the fief system, all agricultural land was accepted as state property and allocation of these lands did not create extensive territorial rights and political autonomy. The fief-holder deprived of any rights over the land through which he claimed to have property rights on the land. Hence the fief-holder could not rent or transfer the land. The crucial importance of the fief system was that it enabled the Ottoman rulers to extract the surplus economic value without conceding political power to the local lords and notables. Through these mechanisms, the Ottoman state not only could achieve to be independent from the periphery, but also made the periphery dependent on itself.



In addition to the institutional features of the Ottoman state regarding the recruitment of bureaucrats and the land regime, Heper gives utmost attention to the existence of cluster of norms and values related with the ruling activity and administration of the state as the most important dimension of the institutionalization of the state. The argument is that there was a 'secular and state-oriented tradition', namely *adab* tradition, in the Ottoman state. Basically, *adab* tradition amounts to the development of *raison d'Etat*, which was neither subordinated to Islamic law nor to the personal will of the Sultan. It does not mean that *adab* tradition is a source of power external and rival to the authority of the Sultan. As mentioned above, the Sultan had the absolute authority. However, through the Sultan's education and training of the bureaucrats, *adab* tradition with its values and norms, which gave priority to the question of what is good for the state, embraced by the sultan. As a consequence, as Heper underlines, it prevented the arbitrary use of power on the part of the Sultan and also possibility of overruling Islamic rules when they contradict with *raison d'Etat*.

The concept of *Örf'i Sultani*, Heper (1985a: 25) notes, was the part of this state tradition. It “refers to the will or command of the sultan as a secular ruler” whose decisions were “based on the measuring rods of 'necessity' and 'reason', and not on the personal whims of the sultan.” Heper states that necessity and reason as being the criteria for the Sultan's rule constituted the basis for the ruling strata in the administration of the state in general as well. By this way, “a particular outlook”, which was oriented merely *raison d'Etat*,

was developed and it prevented the Ottoman state to be developed as an extreme transcendental state. On the contrary, the consequence of the development of this secular and state-oriented tradition, arbitrary rule of the sultan was not in question. Therefore, Heper (1985a) argues, during the classical age, the institutionalization of adab tradition made the Ottoman sultans 'enlightened despots' and 'the Ottoman version of *raison d'Etat* a *Rechtsstaat*. This makes the Ottoman state, for Heper, a moderate transcendental state.

Heper draws on Strayer (1970), and Badie and Birnbaum (1983) in order to clarify the nature of the Ottoman state. The level of institutionalization (as Strayer's criterion), and the level of independence from religion and local power sources as (Badie and Birnbaum criterion) clearly shows, Heper argues, that the Ottoman state is the example of a sovereign, autonomous transcendental state par excellence.

Last point Heper raises as a feature of the Ottoman state in the classical age is the perception of the state as a household. With the sultan as its head, its territory as the 'dynastic patrimony' and its ruling strata as 'slaves of the head' and 'staff of the household', Heper (1985a: 28) notes, the image of household came up with "a metaphorical integration of the entire state into a single household". Although family or household metaphor seems to be contradictory to the institutional character of the state, since it evokes informal relations and ties, as Heper (1985a: 28) states, it reinforced the

conception of state as an integrated entity and hence “provided the sultans with a means by which to defend the state from potentially divisive forces”. In addition to this integrative force at a symbolic level, household metaphor informs the nature of the relationship between bureaucracy and the sultan. Heper argues, bureaucracy was accepted as 'extension' of the sultan and 'absolute loyalty' was in question. To put this with a Weberian terminology, as Heper does, bureaucracy was an instrument for the sultan.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there had been substantial transformations taken place in the institutionalization pattern of the Classical age. As the sources of these changes, Heper underlines the increasing weakness and backwardness in economy and warfare. Development of capitalist economy in Europe started to affect the Ottoman Empire in a way of disintegration of Ottoman socio-economic structure and destruction of the pre-capitalist modes of production. Not unrelated to the development of capitalist system, developments in the military technology undermined Ottoman military power and hence the backbone institutions of the Ottoman state. As briefly discussed above, the military capacity, economic revenues, either as war booties, tribute or tax, and the land regime were strictly interdependent to each other. Any problem in one area would create immediate and vital problems in other areas. Therefore, decreasing military power put pressure on the taxation system, hence on the land regime. In other words, the state system had been shaking.

In line with needs of the changing warfare, a professional and regular army equipped with new military technology should replace the old military system. However, such a change brought about a financial burden. Therefore, a new taxation system was established by replacing the fief-system with tax-farming. It is important to underline here that since fief-system was one of the main reasons behind the power of the center against peripheral forces. Thus, these transformations influenced the reciprocal positions of center and periphery.

As Heper points out corruption, patronage and faction were the most important results of tax-farming. It gave way to corrupted relation in the allocation of the rights tax-farming between bureaucrats, tax-farmers and bankers. The center had increasingly lost its ability to extract economic surplus without compromising its authority, Increasing economic power of tax-farmers caused the emergence of 'a new stratum of local notables'. The corrupted relations between state bureaucrats and local tax-farmers, Heper states, implicated personal and group interests into the state activities. On the contrary to the classical age, factions emerged within the state. Even the sultan and his throne could not keep itself immune from the effects of factions. As one manifestation of factions, patronage also became a rule in state affairs instead of an exception. It might be argued that the center not only started to loose its superior position before the peripheral forces, but also had been loosing its unity and integrity maintained by *adab* tradition. As Heper (1985a: 31) puts, “the *adab* tradition of the earlier centuries, a common

outlook, secular and state-oriented, was eroded". Heper argues that as a result of these developments, there had been a shift in the main characteristic of the Ottoman state from moderate transcendental to extreme transcendental state.

With the decay of the institutional mechanisms, which kept the state system immune from the penetration of personal and social-group interests, Heper importantly underlines, bureaucracy had been losing its instrumental character. It was no longer a mere tool with its absolute loyalty to the sultan. This shift in the position and character of state bureaucracy is very crucial for Heper's argument. It seems possible to argue that from Heper's perspective, this shift amounts to a beginning of a split between 'the two bodies' of the sultan; sultan as a person and as the embodiment of the state. Heper (1985a: 32) argues, as the sultan lost his control over bureaucracy and economic sources, "he could no longer act as the locus of a moderately transcendental state."

Decreasing control bureaucracy and peripheral forces, however, did not make periphery independent from the center. The dependency of the periphery to the state, which was the situation in the classical age, continued to be in question, though out of different reasons. Heper (1985a: 32) states that periphery could not achieve to develop 'a substitute for the *adab* tradition' through establishing an 'horizontal link' among peripheral forces, which "might have led to the emergence of a genuine civil society, or at least, a *Standesstaat*, or polity of estates." Instead new local notables found the

possibility of maximization of their personal gains in forming a 'vertical links' with the state bureaucracy. It seems fair to argue that local notables established a parasitic relation with the state, which made them in a different way dependent to the state. Heper (1985a: 33) clearly puts this situation;

[T]he local notables were not primarily interested in becoming agricultural entrepreneurs and building up autonomous power. Thus, they became tax-farmers, acting governors, or members of governors' councils, and, later, of local 'representative' councils. Rather than rise to form a countervailing force, even at the peak of their power, they were willing to fill the slots that the center saw appropriate for them.

Following Heper, it might be argued that the above mentioned changes and transformations did not bring about a fundamental change in the center-periphery relation which would lead to the emergence of a new type of polity shaped by compromise or consensus. Consequently, Heper (1985a: 34) notes, civil society continued to be under the domination of the state.

Heper underlines a shift in the locus of the state as a result of these developments. As discussed above with the instrumental character of bureaucracy, household metaphor for the integrity of the state and the Sultan as being above any social partiality, there was a unity between the state and the sultan. In other words, the sultan as person was the embodiment of the state. In Heper's words, he was the locus of the state. However, this unity ceased to be in question with the degeneration of the classical period's institutional patterns. Now, the state and its bureaucracy gained its own existence separated from the sultan. He started to be aligned with one or the

other faction within the state. Relative autonomy of bureaucracy from the sultan and their increasing importance via tax-farming system and the development of diplomacy put bureaucratic class in a much more dominant position. Heper (1985a: 36) evaluates this increasing autonomy of bureaucracy as the new possibility for moderate transcendental state in which “the normative framework... was going to be somewhat different, and the civil bureaucratic elite were to make great efforts to elevate themselves to the status of the representatives of that state.”

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, bureaucracy had tried to reconstruct the center like the one in the classical age, however instead of the sultan, this time bureaucracy would be the locus of the state. As Heper argues, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these attempts were materialized. The nature of this process, however, should be clarified. First, the shift regarding the locus of the state did not give rise to a different relation between center and periphery. In other words, their perception of each other did not change. For the center, periphery should be under control and domination. As Heper notes, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the modernization efforts that the bureaucratic strata undertook were motivated by the desire to strengthen the center itself. Second, the reform movements and other transformations took place during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for Heper, should be read as the manifestations of this effort of strengthening the center, instead of products of the development of the periphery as a counterforce to the center. This is why, for Heper, *Sened-i İttifat* (Deed of Alliance) of 1808 cannot be accepted as an attempt toward constitutionalism

in the sense of imposing limitations on the state sovereignty for the benefits of peripheral forces. It was rather an agreement “between a center which was interested in maintaining its dominance at all costs and a periphery which was only interested in preserving its influence in a limited sphere, namely in the localities.” (Heper, 1985a: 39) Much more tense conflict between center and periphery raised, Heper states, during the Tanzimat (Reform) Period (1839 – 1876). In the Tanzimat Period, the center aimed to establish itself even stronger by eliminating the local notables as intermediaries between the state and its subject. By this direct identification of the state with the people, it was aimed to secure the loyalty of masses and secure tax revenues.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contrary to increasing autonomy of bureaucracy, Sultan Mahmud II (1808 – 1839) tried to strengthen center's domination and supremacy through reestablishing the identification of the sultan and the state, which was the case in the Classical age. In other words, as Heper (1985a: 43) puts, Mahmud II aimed to establish “a moderate transcendentalist state with the state structures on the ruler.” However, this could only be possible at the expense of both power of the bureaucracy and privileges of the periphery. In other words, this attempt amounted to a struggle also within the center. The sultan could only occupied the locus of the state again as long as he achieved to keep bureaucracy in an instrumental position under his authority.



The Tanzimat Period following Mahmud II's rule, gave rise to a moderate transcendental state. Yet, this time, on the contrary to Mahmud's aspirations, "the state was structured in the civil bureaucracy, [which] aspired to substantive rather than instrumental rationality" (Heper, 1985a: 45-46). That is to say, as Heper explains from a Weberian perspective, bureaucracy came to a position to define the normative structure and the main goals of the state. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the degeneration of the Classical period's institutional patterns, which constituted the basis for a moderate transcendental state embodied on the Sultan, bureaucracy had increasingly acquired an autonomous position within the center. This processes reached its conclusion with the establishment of bureaucracy's own moderate transcendental state. It is also important here to note that, during this time, since periphery had never formed a counterforce to the center and was able force the state to compromise, the transcendental character had not been challenged. As we understand from Heper's analysis, the Ottoman polity oscillated between extreme and moderate forms of transcendentalism. In one form or the other, transcendental character, Heper argues, is the Ottoman legacy for the Turkish Republic. Heper (1985a: 46) states that this legacy:

basically consisted of two types of moderate transcendentalist state – one structured in the ruler, the other on the bureaucracy. While a tradition of a moderate transcendentalist state structured on the ruler developed during the Classical period and the reign of Mahmud II, that of a moderate transcendentalist state structured on bureaucracy flourished during the Tanzimat years of 1839-1876.

### **5.3.2 Ataturkist State and Thought**

The historical conditions when the Turkish Republic was founded determined the nature of it. These conditions, Heper points out, consisted of internal and external conflicts, the fear of disintegration, and demise of harmony in the society. These circumstances were also influential in Ataturk's conception of state. The World War I (1914-18) and the war of independence (1920-22) as the reasons of external conflict and – not unrelated with the external sources– Armenian and Kurdish nationalism are pointed out as the reasons of internal conflict. The first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century seems to be the times when the disintegrative forces had emerged and played important role in the dissolution of the old polity and also in the emergence of the new one. Heper underlined the latter effect, with reference to Mardin, as the centrality of the fear of disintegration in the minds of the founders of the Republic. As another historical circumstances of the birth of Turkish Republic, Heper (1985a: 48) argues that, “the texture and natural harmony of Turkish society” was dissolved as a result of “the disappearance of minority communities.” Therefore, the maintenance and protection of unity became the basic goal around which Ataturk developed his idea of state.

Another important aspect of Ataturkist state is the idea of national sovereignty. Since Ataturk saw personal rule of the Sultan and the identification of the state with the ruler as the reason of the decline of the Ottoman state, for him, the state should be “distinct from the person of the

Sultan” (Heper, 1985a: 49). And this distinction can be achieved with the idea of a national sovereignty, or people’s sovereignty. It is crucial to clarify what national sovereignty means for Ataturk in order to understand the nature of the Ataturkist state as explained by Heper.

The assumption that all problems, which led to decline and corruption in the Ottoman state, arose from the prevalence of the personal and the particular over the general and the common shaped the form and content of the idea of national sovereignty in Ataturk’s mind. To put it differently, what was aimed with restructuring the polity in line with the principle of national sovereignty was the elimination of personal interests and factions as well as displacing the personal rule of the Sultan and thereby, maintaining the rule of general will and common good of the people.

In Ataturk’s mind, as Heper discusses, the general interest and will of the nation is different than the aggregation of the interests of different groups in the society. The general will, common good and the collective consciousness are inherent in the nation. What matters is not to define or determine the general will, but to reach the knowledge of it. Since the general will is nothing to do with public opinion, and people’s sovereignty is not popular sovereignty, the substance of the nation’s interest, its will and main goals are not subject to discussion. The enlightened elite and the leaders of the nation can impose reforms and certain institutions from above, since they have already acquired the knowledge of the general will and “the genuine

feelings and desires of the nation”. As long as these elites take their decisions and rule the society according to the general interests of the nation, instead of their personal interests, their rule is contradictory neither to the idea of people’s sovereignty nor to democracy. As long as the final destination is determined and fixed with the aim of common good, politics is simply a matter of implementing necessary means to reach this goal. That is to say, imposition of reforms from above, shaping the public opinion, and rule of elites do not necessarily create undemocratic consequences.

For Heper, the elitist character of Ataturkist thought and his idea of national sovereignty seem to be contradictory. However, when the polemical character of Ataturk’s ideas is understood, this contradiction can be solved. Heper (1985a: 51) argues to clarify this point that the principle of national sovereignty “made it clear not to whom sovereignty belonged, but, rather, to whom it did not belong”. That is to say, it challenged the personal authority of the sultan. Once “the people would pass through the necessary stages of progress towards a more civilized pattern of life”, and they acquire the knowledge of the general will and collective consciousness, then the idea of people’s sovereignty realizes itself in its genuine meaning. Until this progression is achieved, the elites should lead the people throughout the “necessary stages of progress towards a more civilized pattern of life (Heper, 1985a: 62). Still, however, questioning the democratic content of Ataturkist thought seems a legitimate question. In Heper’s narration, democratic dimension seems to arise not from what Ataturk did, rather it comes from

what he did not. This is why Heper underlines the polemical character of Ataturkist thought. Other than that the only thing Heper presents about Ataturk is his belief on the people's potential to reach a level of rationality for a rational democracy. As discussed below, this polemical character of Ataturkist thought would be illuminating for Heper's explanation of bureaucratization of the state.

Here comes the question of how the elites find out the 'truth' about the national will and interest and lead the society to the right direction. This is related with the positivistic dimension of Ataturkist thought. Heper (1985a: 63) states that Ataturk believes that "a scientific approach was an indispensable tool both for discovering the collective conscience of the people and final state towards which their conscience was directing them." The establishment of people's sovereignty, or the condition for people to take their sovereignty in their own hands fully, depends on the level of rationality they reach, which is also the final stage of progress. "The final stage towards which Ataturk thought the people were progressing was a stage at which they were going to have the capacity to create a dynamic consensus, and thus be able to resolve progressively conflicts about fundamental claims" (Heper, 1985a: 63).

The positivist dimension of Ataturkist thought seems to leave its imprints on his conception of democracy, which turns out to be a polity where conflicts are resolved by intellectual debates by individuals thinking rationally

and objectively. This is what Heper calls rational democracy. According to this conception, democracy is related with “debate among the knowledgeable”, or a rational discussion among rational actors. The major expectation of the founders of the Republic, as Heper (2000: 72) puts, is a regime “where the long-term interests of the community would not be sacrificed to narrow political interests.” It seems possible to argue that the rationality in rational democracy comes from its orientation towards common good and general interest as much as the scientific approach it uses.

As another major theme in Heper’s analysis, he discussed Atatürkist thought in terms of the locus of the state, which is again explained by Heper with reference to an effort to differentiate state from the person of the ruler. In Atatürk’s mind, neither military nor civil bureaucracy is conceptualized as the locus of the state. Atatürk did not think the military as the locus of the state in order to prevent the politicization of the military. For him, the military should be ‘above politics’ and be the guardian of the general interest and the genuine goals of the Turkish nation.

Civil bureaucracy was not conceived as the locus of the state either. Civil bureaucracy’s ongoing loyalty to the Sultan, on the one hand, and the previous experiences where bureaucracy acted to promote their personal interests, on the other, ruled out this option. Instead, Atatürk defended the idea that bureaucracy is a machine-like entity, which is used for the advancement of the goals determined outside the bureaucracy.

During the War of Independence until the foundation of the Republic, Grand National Assembly was the locus of the state. GNA represented the totality and unity of the state, instead of being the assembly where different interests or groups were represented and seek to favor their particular interests. As Heper states, “Ataturk did not see the GNA as a political agency.” Rather it is an administrative organ. This statement also indicates that the political is accepted as the source fractions and personal interests opposed to the unity and the general interest. By being not political amounts to not being harboring division and fractions. The possibility of being the locus of the state depends on the capacity of representing unity by excluding fractions. This is why “when the assembly was torn apart by fractional politics it could no longer be a partner in fulfilling the state function” (Heper, 1985a: 59). As a result of the intrusion of partiality and fractions into GNA, it was replaced by the office of the President as the locus of the state. That is to say, hereafter, the President represented the state and became the symbol of the national unity.

As Heper notes, in Ataturk’s mind, the *raison d’etre* of the state was the prevalence of the general interest and the task of the state elites was ‘to exercise the sovereignty’ accordingly. In Heper’s explanation of the nature of the Ataturkist state and the mindset of the founders of the Republic, his narration is strongly based on showing the polemical character of the concepts and ideas related with the state. In his discussion on sovereignty, locus of

stateness, and *raison d'être*, Heper emphasizes that the basic idea and concern in all these matters was to overcome the personal rule and particular interests and to replace them by the general will and interest of the nation. Not only the ancient regime based on the personal rule of the Sultan was eliminated, but also the new political structure was tried to be built in order to prevent any new developments, which may give way to personalization of the state.

The institutionalization of the state was another part of this effort of depersonalization of the state. Heper (1985a: 61) states that not only everyday working of public affairs was depersonalized but also Ataturk aimed to establish “the republican version of the adab tradition” to make the national and formal character of the state institutionalized. In this process, Heper gives utmost attention to Ataturk’s efforts in presenting the independence war, and the foundation of the Republic as the achievements of the nation, not of himself as its leader.

### **5.3.3 1930-1950 and the bureaucratization of Ataturkist thought**

Heper persistently argues that there is a difference between the idea of state in Ataturk’s mind and the actual development of the Turkish state in the Republican period. For him, this difference arose from the impact of civil bureaucracy to state’s development, their interpretation – or as Heper puts, their distortion – of Ataturkist thought. Heper (1985a: 68) claims that the



difference “between the state tradition, which may be traced back to Ataturk and that which can be attributed to the bureaucratic intelligentsia” should be given a central importance in analyzing the development of Turkish state.

It seems possible to argue that Heper mentions two transformations. One is the transformation of Ataturk’s charismatic rule into the rule of bureaucracy. The other one is that of Ataturkist thought from a worldview to an ideology. As Heper puts, the first transformation created a legitimacy problem from the bureaucratic rule. Because bureaucratic elite could not replace Ataturk’s charisma, it needed to find out another source for its own legitimation. This problem of legitimacy was solved by the transformation of Ataturkist thought as an ideology. By declaring itself as the guardian of this ideology, bureaucratic elite tried to legitimate its power and privileged status.

Heper explains the reasons behind the bureaucratization of the Ataturkist thought and increased power of bureaucratic elite in political life mainly with reference to İnönü and his influence on these developments and also to the bureaucratic tradition. Heper gives central importance to the personal differences of Ataturk and İnönü, as statesmen, in his explanation of the course of events following the foundation of the Republic. For Heper, whereas Ataturk was ‘a man of spectacular action’ and a revolutionary charismatic leader, Inonu was a moderate, ‘a man to administer but not to lead’. He was ‘never a man of great moves’, rather defending gradual reforms within the established order. As the imprints of Inonu, Heper underlines his

efforts to transfer power from political party to government and his choice on order, law, administration and change through and within the established institutions, instead of dynamic change, which revolutionizes the existing institutional settings. As a result of this, as Heper (1985a: 69) puts, “Inonu ushered Turkish politics into a period during which the charismatic rule of Ataturk was ... routinized and supplemented by the bureauc-racy.”

In addition to Inonu’s contributions, Heper also explains what made possible the bureaucratic rule with reference to the tradition and organizational characteristics of bureaucracy. Civil bureaucracy could keep itself independent and relatively autonomous from outside political interference as a closed system. This protected existence of bureaucracy could be possible with the special laws and regulations, ‘the institution of seniority and the educational caste system’ provided by the Ottoman-Turkish tradition on which bureaucracy established itself. In addition to this independence, job security and high salaries increased the prestige of civil bureaucracy. Heper stresses the role of formal education of bureaucrats in the permanence of their institutional tradition and also in terms of their political socialization through which bureaucratic elite have reproduced the idea that they are the guardians of the Republican regime, Ataturk’s reforms and they have the necessary knowledge to rule and lead the country. At this point, Heper states, from a Weberian perspective, that bureaucracy was no longer instrumental to the political power; instead it became “the part of political center of the Republican regime”. For Heper, this could be possible with a legitimate basis

through the conception of Atatürkist thought as an ideology, which in turn provided the substantive content of civil bureaucracy.

Heper argues that bureaucratic elites could not justify and legitimate their power and determinant role in political matters and public affairs, unless they transform the Atatürkist thought from a “technique of finding out the truth” and a *Weltanschauung* into an ideology, a political manifesto and declared themselves as the guardian of this ideological interpretation of the Atatürkist thought. Heper also notes that this bureaucratic interpretation of the Atatürkist thought constituted the limit of civil bureaucratic elites’ tolerance to democracy. As long as the ideas defended in the political sphere are in line with this framework, then they can be tolerated and allowed to exist.

The transformation of Atatürkist thought from a *Weltanschauung* to an ideology brought about a parallel transformation in the Atatürkist state. As it is mentioned above, Atatürk aimed to establish a transient transcendental state, which was supposed to be a transitional stage towards a moderate instrumental state. However, bureaucratic interpretation of Atatürkist thought also distorted this ideal and defended transcendental state as an aim in itself, instead of means for transition. By distinguishing Atatürkist thought and state from the latter developments, that is bureaucratization of the state, Heper seems to explain the intensification of the center/periphery clash, or the struggle between state elites and political elites. As we will see below, Heper locates the main problem of Turkish democracy within this center/periphery

struggle. Consequently, in his analysis of bureaucratization of the state, Heper seems to relieve Ataturkist thought and his ideals of modernization from the burden of being the source of democracy problems.

As it is mentioned above, Heper argues that the bureaucratic interpretation of Ataturkist thought as a political ideology is its distortion. In his explanation of the Ataturkist thought as a worldview without any substantive content, Heper shows the polemical character of it as evidence to his claims. In other words, the ideas in Ataturk's mind regarding the Republic, the state, sovereignty, and bureaucracy did not designate what should be, but on the contrary, they were related with what should not be. That is to say, the Ataturkist thought was developed as a resistance to the personal rule of the Sultan and the ancient regime. It seems possible to argue that the polemical character of it can continue as long as the ideas, institutions or political power to which Ataturkist thought was resistant to remain in their places. Once the Republic was founded, the Ataturkist thought became the establishment. In turn, it lost its polemical character. Therefore, from this perspective, what Heper defines as distortion of the Ataturkist thought can be accepted as its natural transformation based on being the new sovereign.

### **5.3.4 Transition to Multi-party Politics**

Starting from 1950, the Democrat Party government and multiparty experience was a critical development in Turkish political history. Among other things, Heper first discusses this period in order to show the characteristic of bureaucratic transcendentalism, the ideas of prejudices of civil bureaucratic elites about the people, politicians and democracy as a political system. In other words, bureaucracies' attitude toward democracy and politics was revealed in their resistance to DP government. Foremost, their resistance to DP can be accepted as the manifestation of their non-instrumental character defending a particular substantive value system.

Heper stresses two main arguments raised by the civil bureaucracy. First one is related with democracy as a political system, and second is about the Turkish people and politicians, and therefore related with democracy as experienced in Turkey. Heper argues that civil bureaucracy thought democracy, in its ideal form is the best political regime. However, in its practice, democracy can easily be abused. As a result, instead of serving for the generation of general will and national interest, it turns out to be a system of disorder where personal interests are pursued at the expense of interest of the society and nation in general. The cultivation of civilized and educated persons, responsible politicians and establishment rational policy making processes approximate the practice of democracy to its ideal form. Yet, the civil bureaucracy in the 1950s was suspicious about the existence of

responsible politicians and educated rational people in Turkey. Therefore, in their view, multiparty experience and the DP government constituted a threat to the Republican values and institutions, Ataturk's reforms and national interest. Evaluated as an extreme instrumentalism, the DP government gave priority to individual and particular group interests, and also provided the fertile ground for the raise of anti-Republican forces.

Heper reads the struggle between the DP and the bureaucratic intelligentsia as a manifestation of center-periphery clash in Turkey. Through the responses of bureaucracy to the DP government, Heper explicates bureaucracy's understanding of politics and democracy. First, Heper notes, bureaucratic elites thought that politics and democracy are related with policy-making process, which should be based on rational processes and high level of knowledge. Since politics is not a matter of questioning and re-defining substantial values, norms and goals, the only thing to decide is the means and policies to reach these goals. Therefore, instead of popular discussion, politics, as a decision-making process, can be understood as a dialogue and discussion among elites and intelligentsia with their rational and well-formulated ideas.

In bureaucratic elites' response to the DP government, Heper acknowledges the Ataturkist elements. However, he insistently underlines that their response consists of only one aspect of Ataturkist thought, while ignores the other one. As Heper (1985a: 77) puts, "the post-1950 bureaucratic

intelligentsia...continued to place emphasis on the elitist rather than on the democratic dimension of Atatürkist thought.” It is true that the positivist aspect of Atatürkist thought inevitably comes up with a certain degree of elitism and puts universities, intellectuals, and elites at the center of this process of discovery. However, Heper (1985a: 80) claims, there is another aspect of Atatürkist thought, which is Atatürk’s trust to people’s potential and his “willingness to help people acquire higher levels of rationality in the hope that in time they would themselves be able to generate goals of Turkey.” Because of this second aspect, the utopian aspect, Heper claims, there is a difference between elitism in Atatürkist thought and in the minds of bureaucratic intelligentsia.

Besides civil bureaucracy, the military has been another institution, which identifies itself with the state and assumes the role of guardian of the Republican reforms. Heper states that this identification of the state and military is the reason behind the impartiality of the military towards political parties and social groups. For Heper, this impartiality of the military gives *sui generis* character of the civil-military relations in Turkey. Heper claims the military interventions should be evaluated in the light of this uniqueness. Since the military is impartial, it intervened to politics not in order to put certain ideology into power, but because the military thought the polarization and factions in politics put the national interest and the security of the state into danger. Heper argues, the military interventions took place because of the failure of the politicians, not because of military’s own agenda.

For Heper, the absence of organized civil society a genuine middle class, politically influential social groups or, established institutions, which link political and social structure in Turkey had three important effects on the way DP made politics. On the one hand, since DP could not represent a social group or an economic interest group, it tried to provide the necessary support from the electorate for its power by politically positioning itself against the center/bureaucratic intelligentsia. It emerged with the claim of representing the people/periphery against the state/center/bureaucratic intelligentsia. During its government, DP tried to overrule center's authority and instrumentalize bureaucracy in line with its political goals. As the second effect, Heper underlines the populist character of DP. Since it could not represent certain economic or social group in the society, it mobilized the people through populist means. "They made a direct appeal through religion and other symbols, there being no classes or institutions through which to work as intermediaries" (Heper, 1985a: 100). The last effect was that DP tried to "substitute a 'party-centered polity' for a state-dominant political system". As being a party autonomous from social groups, DP aimed to monopolize all state institutions for their own purposes. As Heper puts, this contributed the prejudices of the center against the peripheral forces. In terms of the locus of the state, however, all these attempts of DP could not create a shift in the political system and in the period of 1950-60, bureaucracy kept its place as the locus of the state. Yet, it triggered the replacement of bureaucracy with the military at the center of the polity. 1960 military intervention became an important threshold towards such a replacement.



Until 1970s, the bureaucracy and the military kept their places and continued to identify themselves with the state. However, during 1970s, the military started to replace bureaucracy as the locus of the state. 1971 intervention increased the influence of the military. On the other hand, coalition governments in the same period undermined the power of civil bureaucracy. As a result of the increasing patronage and political intervention to the bureaucratic structure, bureaucracy lost its relatively protected sphere. Additionally, ideological fractions and polarization entered bureaucracy and it lost its homogenous character. With the 1980 military intervention, the replacement of bureaucracy was completed and the military became the locus of the state together with the president.

While bureaucracy was losing its power during 1960s and 70s, party-centered politics increasingly defined the political system. Heper argues, in 1970s party-centered politics was pushed to its extreme and became extreme instrumentalism. As it is discussed above, following Badie and Birnbaum, Heper defined the problem in 1970s, where the absence of civil society came together with the erosion of the state, as a lack of societal coordination. In other words, neither civil society nor the state could provide the coordination. Therefore, as Heper puts, polarization and fractions became the main characteristics of 1970s.

Heper claims, similar to other military interventions, the reason behind 1980 intervention was the failure of politicians. They pursued their partial interests and ideological position at the expense of general interest and common good. The military, again, as Heper states, found no choice but to intervene for the long-term interests of the state and also for the sake of democracy. Therefore, it was not an intervention against democracy, but against irresponsible politicians. Heper claims the military has never given up to support rational democracy. Given the circumstances of the 1970s, not only politicians but also civil bureaucracy can retain its power for societal coordination. In such a situation, Heper notes, the military saw itself as the only institution, which is able to give priority to common good and national interests.

Additionally, for Heper, the product of 1980 intervention and 1981 constitution became a combination of transcendentalism and instrumentalism. On the one hand, the military declared itself as the guardian of the state and national interests, and on the other hand, it left space for politics, particularly on economic issues. For Heper this means the military after 1980 turned back to Atatürkist thought by rescuing it from its bureaucratic interpretation. In Heper's narration of the history of Turkish Republic, this return meant an important step to a healthy condition for the cultivation of rational democracy.

Before continuing on Heper's ideas of consolidation of democracy, it would be useful to underline his main arguments in the state tradition in

Turkey. Heper argues, on the contrary to the claims of many scholars in state-centered approach, the best example for the transcendental state is Ottoman-Turkish state, rather than France. As a result of the absence of a politically influential middle class and aristocratic class, an organized civil society could not be emerged in Ottoman-Turkish polity. Therefore, the state could successfully emerge as a strong and autonomous institution. In terms of the degree of stateness, then, Ottoman-Turkish socio-political structure has been the example of the existence of strong state. The tradition of strong state had started from the early years of the Ottoman Empire and has continued to be the case in Turkey until today. Therefore, the political life and culture of Ottoman-Turkish polity should be investigated in line with this continuity of the strong state tradition.

The state in Turkish political history has been identical with the political center, as a result of which, the fundamental demarcation in politics has been between powerful center/state and particularistic and segmented periphery. One consequence of strong state is the ability of state in determining the common good and general interest. Correspondingly, the peripheral forces, which always tried to undermine the authority of the center, pursued their partial interests. That is to say, in Heper's narration, center-periphery cleavage corresponds general interest-partial interest polarization. This causes in Turkish politics an oscillation between transcendentalism and instrumentalism.

For Heper, political party structure after the transition to multi-party politics has also been the embodiment of this center-periphery demarcation. Further, since the lack of civil society, political parties appeared with the claim of representing the periphery and the people produced instead their own anti-bureaucratic elites. As a result, political elite-state elite struggle became another main character of political life in Turkey.

Since Heper argues that the proper condition for democracy is a moderate combination of transcendentalism and instrumentalism, both strong state and particularistic periphery, or both state elites and political elites can create problems for the consolidation of democracy. As he (Heper, 1985a: 98) puts;

The difficulties of democracy in Turkey manifest themselves in two interconnected ways. The state elites are sensitive to the crisis of integration, and therefore not sympathetic towards the periphery. In its turn, the periphery is over-defiant which reinforces the prejudices of the state elites. This state of affairs has been attributed...to the fact that the opening-up of the political system in Turkey did not bring face to face different socio-economic groups. Nor did it result in a central authority being faced by intransigent estates. Instead, it produced a dominant state faced by an ill-organized and politically subordinate periphery.

Not unexpectedly, Heper's analysis on strong state tradition and the main dualities he explains constitutes the backbone of his writings in democratic consolidation in Turkey. Drawing on these writings would be useful before discussing Heper's conclusions' limits in thinking democracy.

## **5.4 Consolidation of Democracy as a Balanced Elite Struggle**

Metin Heper defines the consolidation of democracy as “democracy becoming the only game in town” following Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan. To make democracy the only game, there are a number of conditions to be maintained. First, as Heper (2002b: 138) puts, is “a consensus among the members of the political class on the rules of democracy, freedom of expression, absence of restrictions on political participation, free and fair elections, and the like.” Second condition is “national unity” whenever democracy is in danger. For him, the possibility of such a unity can only be maintained if there is “harmony and trust” among the political actors. Third prerequisite, Heper underlines, for the consolidation of democracy is the existence of a balance between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of democracy. Here, it should be underlined that democracy in Heper's conception is liberal democracy. Following Sartori, Heper puts the balance of these two dimensions of democracy at the center of his analysis of Turkish democracy. In other words, search for such a balance becomes the main criterion for him to evaluate the success of the consolidation. Therefore, it is important to explain what Heper, drawing on Sartori, means by the horizontal and vertical dimension of democracy. Vertical dimension refers to ‘responsibility’, which is acting in line with the long-term and general interests of the country. Horizontal dimension refers to ‘responsiveness’, which means being sensitive to the interest of the citizens, and to the particular interests of groups. In Heper's

analysis, we can see that he associates the vertical dimension and acting responsible with state elite, and the horizontal dimension and representation of particular interests of different groups in a society with the political elite. Then, he (Heper, 1992b: 170) argues for a working and sustainable democracy, what is vital is maintaining a balance between vertical/horizontal dimensions, responsibility/responsiveness, and the state elite/political elite. In his analysis, Heper employs another Sartorian concept, 'rational democracy'. According to this definition, democracy means intelligent discussion on the common good and what is best for the country. For Heper, the state elite in Turkey embrace this definition of democracy and expecting from the political elite accepting the same conception. The tension arises when political elite give priority to particular interests and goes against rational democracy. Heper (2002b: 139) argues, "...if politicians do not pay adequate attention to the said interests, not only does their party lose political support, but the political regime itself also faces a crisis of legitimacy. In the past, such crisis of legitimacy have thrice resulted military interventions."

About the problem of democratization in Turkey, Heper (2002b: 140) underlines a fact about Turkish democracy: "fact that democracy in Turkey was introduced in the 1940s by the state elites...rather than by political elites that represented socio-economic groups." For Heper, the main reason behind the transition to multiparty system in the 1940s by the efforts of the state elite was nothing to do with the aim of expanding political participation. What the state elite was expecting from democracy was rational and intelligent debate

about the question of what is best for the state. On the one hand, the state elite has always been suspicious about ordinary citizen in his/her capacity to reach a rational conclusion for the long-term interests of the country. Thus, a widespread participation is not one of the immediate parts of the democratization process initiated by the state elite. It is possible to argue that rational democracy as we see in Heper's works has elitists' implications. On the other hand, for Heper, any demand for the expansion of participation did not come from below, from the society either. This shows that socio-economic groups did not play role in the transition of democracy, and this fact marked the nature of democratization in Turkey.

There are three main consequences of the tension between the state elite and political elite in Turkey. First, this tension feeds a tendency in Turkish politics of “revolv[ing] around 'high politics' rather than the day-to-day needs of the country and its people” (Heper, 2002b: 140). The political actors are concerned with politics rather than policy. Second, as Keyman and Heper underline, political patronage and clientalism is also the result of this tension and uneasiness. The third implication of the disagreement between the state elites and political elites is the different meanings of democracy that they embrace. For the state elite, Heper argues, democracy is an end in itself, whereas political elite tends to accept democracy as a means for pursuing particular interests on the expense of the long-term interest of the country. For the state elite democracy as end, “that of finding what was best for the country” (Heper, 2002b: 141). The consequence of this difference, the military

does have a trust on democracy itself, but has always had suspicious against the political elite, who, the military thinks, may put the particular interests at the expense of the general interest of the country. Heper (2002b: 141) claims, “[i]t was for this reason that the military did not consider staying in power indefinitely. Here the Turkish case differed significantly from the events in Europe between the World Wars.”

This reasoning gives Heper's analysis of democratization a questionable dimension. For him, as mentioned above, the definition of a consolidated democracy is that democracy being the only game in town. Then, in his analysis on the uniqueness of the civil-military relations in Turkey, he tries to show the military as the supporter even the guardian of democracy, which makes democracy the only game. However, he could not ignore the paradoxical powerful position of the military in the political system. He (Heper, 2002b:142) argues, “[i]n Turkey, democracy did become the only game in town, but the *rules* of that game did not resemble the rules of liberal democracy.” Because of the powerful position of the military, “although in recent years Turkey has taken important steps towards consolidating its democracy, it failed to completely democratize its political regime.” (Heper, 2002b: 141) At this point, it seems Heper cannot avoid admitting the inadequacy of the definition of the consolidation of democracy as being the only game in town and needs to introduce a separation between consolidation of democracy and democratization of the regime.



In his analysis on the political parties in Turkey, Heper underlines the undemocratic and authoritarian characters of political party leaders. For him, they could not internalize democratic values. On the contrary, lack of intra-party democracy and of any intention to let socio-economic groups to participate to policy making processes and leader domination are the features of political parties, and intolerance to dissent and critique are those of the leaders. Heper (2002b: 146) maintains;

Turkey's experience with democracy has been one of considerable progress towards the consolidation of democracy in the absence of a diffusion of democratic values among the political elite. The progress towards the consolidation of democracy has been a consequence of the fact that democracy was perceived as an end rather than as a means.

At the end, in his analysis, we have on the one hand political elite without any commitment to democracy itself and socio-economic groups without any demand for participation, and on the other hand, we have the state elite, as the modernizers of Turkey, with strong commitment to democracy and democratic values and support them as an end in themselves. Putting the picture in this way seems to saying democracy and democratization can be possible thanks to the state elite, the military in particular in a different way.

Since the transition to multiparty democracy, the political elite has pursued particular interests through political patronage and clientalism as the main strategy in dealing with the socio-economic problems. This is also a part of what Heper means by politics vs. policy orientation. In political elite, there has been no policy orientation, i.e., reaching policies for socio-economic

problems independent from any particular interest through intelligible discussion. (Heper and Keyman: 1998: 259) Populism, empty promises given to constituents for vote, patronage have been the main character of political elite. These inevitably contribute to the state elite's suspicions of politicians and the tension between them.

Why could political elite easily employ patronage and clientalism when they took the government from the modernizers? The reason lies in the nature of Turkish modernization. Since the state became the modernizer, the reformer, the westernizer, industrialization and economic modernization were also the processes that tried to be fulfilled by the state. This put the state at the center of capital accumulation and all major economic activities. When the control of distribution of the state resources was passed to the hands of political elite from the state elite, political patronage and clientalism became the main maxim behind the distribution.

At this point another important duality that Heper and Keyman employ for explaining the circumstances for consolidation of democracy is between strong and weak state. Strong state refers to the powerful, privileged and determinant position of the state elite in general, and the military in particular. Whereas, weakness of the state comes from political patronage and clientalism as the policy making method employed by political elite. The strongness comes from the state elite, and the weakness comes from political elite. This is what Heper and Keyman call “the dual-face” of the state.

Establishment of a balance between the strong and weak state appears as another balance to establish for the prospect of the consolidation of democracy in Turkey (Heper and Keyman, 1998).

In what follows, I attempt to problematize Heper's analysis in terms of the closure of the political as a problem of democracy and argue that his analysis provides a limited perspective to understand the problem of democracy in Turkey. These limitations arise, first from the duality Heper defines as the main opposition in Turkey, and second from his conception of rational democracy. In terms of the duality and the state-centered approach, Heper's analysis prevents us to see different domination relations and exclusionary practices as a democracy problem. In other words, the duality itself creates blind spots for an adequate democratic thought, which can problematize different instances of domination, exclusion and closure of the political. Further, Heper does not see the elitist dimension of rational democracy as a problem, and also he cannot see its anti-political nature.

### **5.5 Duality in Thinking vs. Plurality in Life**

As it is discussed above, Heper claims that the center-periphery opposition and state elite-political elite struggle became the constitutive opposition of the Turkish political life as a result of the historical development of the state and continuity of the strong state tradition. Such a perspective, as its inevitable

consequence, prioritizes one single opposition over other oppositions, or domination relations. Even further, it leaves no room for recognition of various different domination and exclusionary practices, and unequal relations engendering remainders in different ways as political problems. Democratic thought should provide a critical point of view, from which these different instances of unequal relations can be seen as problems. Exclusions based on gender, ethnic or religious identity, domination relations based on economic relations, established social practices, and exclusions embedded in the constitution of the political community, such as nation, cannot be registered within the question of democracy as long as one duality is accepted as the only manifestation of democracy problem, as in the case of Heper. In other words, the moment Heper defines one duality as fundamental, he closes the political for various other dualities and oppositions related with different domination or power relations.

Among other things, I want to underline nation building as the source of established exclusions. This is important in order to show the limits of Heper's analysis, since in Heper constructs his explanation of the problem of democracy on the basis of a narration of continuity, which ignores the nation building processes as a beginning. Therefore, the exclusions embedded in the constitution of the people are ignored. Consequently, later political problems appeared as a result of this original exclusion or constitutive exclusion cannot be problematized or forced to be translated into Heper's duality. In other words, Heper's analysis is inadequate to understand the paradox of democratic

founding. As Honig (2007) argues the paradox of founding is not limited with the founding moment. It becomes a paradox of politics by its recurrence. That is to say, the exclusion embedded in the very moment of founding deploys a democratic deficit in the definition and identity of the people. This is what Rancière means when he claims that there is always a void and a supplement in the definition of the people, which makes the people a permanently contentious category.

I am not claiming that the Turkish Republic and its political culture emerged *ex nihilo*. One way or another its constitution and foundation contains elements of previous political traditions. Yet, it should also be evaluated as a beginning; as an originating moment with a radical claim, that is national sovereignty, nation as political community. And this founding moment, as it is discussed in the first chapter, is a paradoxical one. On the one hand, such a constitution of the political community, definition of the people, enables democracy and the political. On the other hand, the foundation comes up with an outside, excluding certain groups and identities. It contains inclusion and exclusion at the same time. Without any sensitivity to the paradoxical nature of democratic founding, it would not be possible to question the source of certain instances of the closure of the political. The political and its permanent openness should include the possibility of a continuous definition and redefinition of the people. Democratic politics, indeed, is about the capacity of refounding and redefining the boundaries of political community by the remainders of an existing definition.

Another important problem is related with ‘dual thinking’ in general. Trying to understand social, political and economic life from the perspective of a duality comes its inevitable consequence of either reducing reality into this duality at the expense of understanding their experience and manifestations, or ignoring them altogether. Furthermore, the alliance between the two sides of the opposition also remains unnoticed. In Heper’s case, the institutions, norms, identities and practices, on which there is no conflict between state and political elites, are not conceptualized as democracy problem.

## **5.6 Rational or Anti-Political Democracy**

In his writings on consolidation of democracy in Turkey, Heper underlines the importance of rational democracy. In the way Heper discusses, rational democracy seems to be related with a condition of balance between general interest / common good and particular interests. The problem may arise when this balance is destroyed at the expense of either general or particular interest. In Turkish case, as Heper explains, general and particular interests are represented by the state elites and political elites, respectively. Therefore, either side of the struggle should understand the necessity of other’s considerations for a working rational democracy. If not, the result would be either over-politicization or under-politicization.

In this understanding of democracy, politics is understood as the pursuit of particular interests. Therefore, it carries the danger of polarization and ideological factions. Therefore, it should be balanced with a consideration of general interest and common good. In Heper's view, it seems, rationality comes also with this long-term consideration by putting aside particular interest. Foremost, in his analysis, Heper never problematize the determination or formulation of the common good and general interest. It is obvious that this definition is related with another component of rational character of democracy, that is discussion among intellectuals and educated elites. The level of 'rationality' and 'civilization' they reach conditions participation of citizens to the discussion. As it is materialized in his discussion on the difference between Ataturkist thought and its bureaucratic interpretation, trust to people's potential to reach the necessary level of rationality constitutes the democratic dimension of rationalist democracy. To differentiate Ataturkist thought from bureaucratic ideology, Heper seems to be inconsistent in his conception of general will and common good. In his discussion on Ataturkist state and rational democracy, he underlines that general will and common good is intrinsic to the community. And the problem is to reach its knowledge. As we see, scientific approach is the right tool to reveal the 'truth' of the community. Here, I argue that there is no difference between Ataturkist thought and its bureaucratic interpretation from the perspective of the closure of the political and democracy. Both views are similar in the sense of displacing politics with rational administration and

technique of acquiring the knowledge of common good. Both presuppose the existence of a fixed *telos* of the community. The rational discussion, which constitutes the core of rational democracy, is limited with taking the general interests into account, not defining it.

A more fundamental problem compared to the exclusion of the definition of the common good is related with the definition of 'the common' itself. Every discussion on deliberation about the common good presupposes the common, or the people. However, politics, as it is mentioned above, is an act of dis-agreement to the very definition of the common, which is always a form of counting the community parts always engendering non-parts or remainders. The non-part interrupts the order and reveals that it is a miscount. Here the question is that when the remainder of an existing order challenges the order by manifesting its equality and by this way redefines the community, the common or the people, what is the remainders' motive behind its political act? Is it particular interest, or the common good?



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

As the main subject of this study, I focus on three prominent scholars of Turkish politics and society, namely Niyazi Berkes, Şerif Mardin and Metin Heper. Democratic thought in Turkey has been widely based on the historical narration of the development of Turkish politics provided by these three scholars. Berkes explains Turkish modernization as a process of secularization that inevitably led to the emergence of the Republic. In his account, secularization is presented as the meta-narrative of modernization in Turkey. Şerif Mardin focuses on the peculiar development of modernity in Turkey. He employs center-periphery model as the fundamental dialectic that has shaped Turkish politics and society. Metin Heper concentrates on the development of the state and bureaucracy and claims that there has been a strong state tradition in Turkey, which did not change with the foundation of the Republic.

In this study, I try to ask the following question: instead of being the explanations of secularization process, state-society relations, or the elite struggle; instead of being the history of the development of Turkish state and its institutional structure; can these accounts retain their explanatory forces as accounts on democracy at the hearth of which the political is located with its paradoxical and disruptive nature? Can they keep their paradigmatic status when we question secularization, integration, consolidation, consensus and harmony as the aims of politics and democracy? Can they provide a critical perspective where we can resist the undemocratic urges coming from the secular establishment, from the periphery, or from the rational democrats who successfully tame their particular interest with an enough dose of common good?

Since one of my main critiques to the above-mentioned scholars is related with their conception of politics, I begin by framing my own conceptual and theoretical position. In doing so, I draw on two important contemporary political thinkers, Bonnie Honig and Jacques Rancière, who develop a radical political view of democracy. By discussing the writings of these political theorists, I elucidate the meaning of politics and democracy and also try to provide the meaning of the closure of the political.

In her critique, Bonnie Honig explicates the cost of reducing politics to administration and regulation by eliminating disruption, resistance and dissent from politics for democratic life. She reveals the undemocratic impulse

behind all forms of attempts of closure, consolidation and order. This undemocratic impulse, for her, comes from the ignorance to the remainders who are engendered by these very consolidations and orders. She asserts that without any exception, every moral or political order, however they claim to be inclusive or universal, engenders remainders. The problem is when they face with these remainders as inevitable excesses from their conception of subject, identity, community or order they blame the remainders from their oppressed, excluded and marginal positions. Instead, Honig argues, a democratic perspective requires cultivating a sensibility to the remainder of orders and closures. To do this, a permanent openness of critical reflection and contestation should be the main criteria for democratic life. The paradoxical nature of democracy is the related with a permanent possibility of (re)founding, (re)determining and (re)settling our political existence.

Jacques Rancière, with similar concerns though in his own way, aims to refoundation and reinterpretation of politics and democracy. His starting point is a narration on the origin of politics. For him, the beginning of politics is also the beginning of democracy. From the very start he comes up with his main argument that democracy and politics are names for the same things, which is the polemical presence of the parts those who have no parts. Those who have no qualification to be part of ruling claim to part-take in the ruling. With this political act, demos manifest its equality. It is neither a demand of equality nor a struggle for recognition, it is the radical manifestation of the fact that they are equal with everyone and anyone. This initial gesture of the

demos, for Rancière, is constitutive for the meaning of democracy and politics.

Democracy is paradoxical because every count is a miscount and there is always a non-part. It is polemical because since it is not related with consensus or consolidation but disagreement and dissent. It is the polemical interruption of a fundamental equality. In his theory of democracy and politics, Rancière not only shows the constitutive importance of dissent and disagreement, but also defines democracy in relation to equality and as essentially anarchic. To put this in a different way, any inequality and any hierarchy is anti-political, undemocratic and should be resisted and challenged from this radical democratic perspective. Similar to Honig, Rancière also underlines that nothing is ontologically political or non-political. Therefore, their perspective invites us to critically evaluate the claims that certain inequalities and hierarchies are not political, but social, cultural, moral, religious etc. This is a way of escaping from the disruptive impulse of the political. Parallel to this and as another important component of their theories for the critical perspective I try to frame is that politics cannot be limited with a certain domain, with state and its institutional structure. Accordingly, democracy does not mean the establishment of certain set of institutions and procedures.

From the theoretical and conceptual framework that I mentioned above, I critically evaluate Berkes, Mardin and Heper. The fundamental

question is whether their conceptions of politics and their account on Turkish politics can give the paradoxical nature of democracy its due and whether the closure of the political with all the meanings I try to define can be registered as a problem of democracy. The main argument of this thesis is that their accounts consist of limitations in providing an account of the closure of the political. They underline one form of exclusion, struggle and opposition and define it as the fundamental form that shapes the political life in Turkey.

In Berkes, there is no room for the possible reflexes of modernizing secular forces to close the politics. It is not possible to see from his narration that secularization can bring about ways of elimination dissent and contestation from their regime. In Mardin's analysis, he successfully provides a critical perspective of modernization process. To use his terms, he explains the authoritarian impulses of the center. This point also differentiates Mardin from both Berkes and Heper, who are less critical to the authoritative impulses coming from the center and its top-down imposed modernity. Yet, in his analysis, the periphery appears as a monolithic entity. The differences in the society, different relations of inequality and oppression, which are not necessarily related with the state or the center, are kept obscure in the blind spots of Mardin's analysis. Although we can question the democratic character of the center from Mardin's analysis, in his case, there is no room for questioning the content of the peripheral challenge. Lastly, in Heper's analysis, politics is strictly limited with elite struggle, political parties, electoral process and institutional structure. Foremost, his conception of

rational democracy does not provide a perspective where we can problematize the closure of the political.

The main argument of this study is that these three authors, on the one hand, closes politics by the definition they have. In their accounts, politics is defines with reference to the state and governmental activities and it is reduced to administration and regulation. On the other hand, they cannot provide an adequate perspective from which different examples of the closure of politics as different instances of domination, inequality and oppression can be seen and registered as problems of democracy.

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