

## *Erdogan and the presidential system*

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The presidential form of government has become one of the leading democratic political institutions along with the parliamentary system of government. However, the presidential system exists in different forms in various countries depending upon the political situation and environment of the given time when it was established. For instance the American presidency, which is regarded as the oldest and purest form of presidential government, came into being under different circumstances and situation as compared to the French presidency which is considered by the academicians as semi-presidential because of its peculiar co-existence of the presidency and the cabinet. (Understanding presidential system, Anon., n.d., p.2) The United States (US) has a presidential system, as do countries it has influenced regionally, culturally or militarily, including Latin American countries and the Philippines. With the exception of the US, presidential systems in the past have often been associated with politically unstable and authoritarian regimes. Countries that have adopted a form of the parliamentarianism include the United Kingdom (UK), much of continental Europe, Israel, Japan, many of the former British colonies in Africa and Asia, and most Caribbean countries. The French hybrid system has provided a model for a number of countries and is highlighted throughout this section. Countries that have adopted the French Model include former French colonies in West Africa – such as Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, and Senegal – and a few eastern European states, such as Poland and Bulgaria. Portugal also has a hybrid system, with similar elements as the French model. The Portuguese system has influenced former colonies

like Mozambique and Angola. (United Nations Development Program, 1999, p.1) The president represents one of the three branches of power in the federal government of the United States. The rules governing the election and functions of the president are contained in Article II of the US Constitution. The official residence of the president is the White House in Washington D.C. (Szilágyi, 2009, p.310)

As a product of the Turkish Revolution, (Ataturk's reforms and basic principles of Kemalism, Atatürkism), the new secular nation state of Turkey was established by Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia between 1919 and 1923. In a country where the Ottoman Sultans had ruled for centuries, as Allah's Shadow on earth, Mustafa Kemal had the courage and vision to do away with centuries of tradition and corruption by announcing that: "The Turkish State is a Republic", on October 29, 1923. To achieve this first of all he separated the Caliphate (religious leadership of all Moslems) and Sultanate (political leadership), then abolished firstly the Sultanate, then the Caliphate. Later, he replaced the sharia, which is the Law of Koran, with a modern civil code adopted from Swiss civil code, and a penal code modelled on the Italian Penal Code. The new legal system was based on Roman Law (1925-26). Another far-reaching cultural reform was the reform of the alphabet: he abolished the use of Arabic script and adopted Latin characters in 1928. After that, Ataturk gave to Turkish women complete equality in the society. They acquired the right to vote and to be elected to parliament before the women of many European Countries. Reform was carried out in every area of social life. The first political party of the Republic, the Republican People's Party, was established. As Frey emphasised, the statement that Islam was the religion of the state was deleted from the constitution. Religious tribunals were done away with, the fez was outlawed, and the religious dervish order was proscribed. The wearing of religious garb outside of religious buildings was forbidden. The Western calendar and time standards were adopted. A national system of education was established, a national railway network was being built, and the expansion of secular higher education began. Ataturk's Revolution accomplished the basic modernisation of the educated elite and brought it into active political participation. As Frey said, now the possibly more difficult task of modernising the ill-educated masses of the society and involving them in the political process was being undertaken. On account of these exceptional services, Turkish people gave to Mustafa Kemal the name "Ataturk" a venerable name, which means the father of all Turks. As Dankwart Rustow said, Ataturk achieved the transformation of an empire into a nation, of a transitional into a western cultural image. Mustafa Kemal combined the three roles of victorious battlefield commander, state founder

and chief sponsor of large-scale educational establishments (Rustow). Atatürk was a man of action, a man of ideas and a pragmatic far-seeing statesman. The driving force of his life was science, particularly the positive sciences. He built up a socio-political system, called Kemalism/Atatürkism. These are the basic principles of Atatürkism:

- Full independence
  - Anti-imperialism
  - Rationalism and scientism
  - Republicanism
  - Nationalism (Patriotism)
  - Etatism (policy of state control), which is very different to socialism and communism
  - Laicism (Secularism)
  - Revolutionism
  - Contemporaneitism
  - Populism
- Pacifism: Atatürk formulated the most essential principles of Turkey; “peace at home, peace in the world.” This compact sentence carries Atatürk’s thoughts about the internal and external policies of Turkey with absolute clarity. (Arslan, 2005, pp.133–134)

Turkey has been ruled by a single party system for long time. (The Republican People’s Party – CHP) was the only party between 1923 and 1945, when the National Development Party was established. After winning the first multiparty elections in 1946 by a landslide, the Republican People’s Party lost the majority to the Democratic Party in the 1950 elections. During the single-party period, President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk repeatedly requested that opposition parties be established against the Republican People’s Party in order to transition into multi-party democracy). (Ruysdael, 2012, p.214) The majority of Turkish population consists of Sunni Muslims. In the period of Ottoman Empire, Conservative wing was in power. After the collapse of Ottoman Empire (1918–1923), Conservative wings were quite active with Atatürk who was founder of Turkey (1923) during Turkish war of independence. Ultimately in the year of 1923 New Turkey was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk and his politicians completely followed western-oriented policy. The Kemalist model of laicism unintentionally facilitates a politicisation of Islam “from below”, i.e., by political parties and social groups. Their aim is less to transform Turkey back into an Islamic state than to weaken the Kemalist monopoly on the interpretation of religion, to exploit anti-Western

resentments, to win electoral votes from the Kurdish population, and to end the restrictions on religious freedom. The politicisation of Islam “from below” began with Turkey’s transition to a democratic multi-party system. The election victory of the conservative religious Democratic Party (DP, Demokrat Partisi) of Adnan Menderes in 1950 represented an important turning point in Turkish history as political power was no longer viewed as an administrative tool for pushing through an elitist state-building project (Kemalism), but was seen instead as a participatory instrument for asserting its own (religious) interests. Prime Minister Menderes can be credited with having prevented the splintering-off or radicalisation of religious groups and with expanding the state’s social legitimacy through his liberal stance vis-à-vis Islam. By integrating such groups, the Democratic Party was able to ensure that they did not become an “underground movement” but instead became part of the parliamentary system. In the 1970s, the first Islamist parties in Turkey emerged from a democratic, parliamentary environment under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. They not only represented the rights of people with religious interests in a pluralist process of political expression, but also marked out the terms under which parties with Islamist goals could operate and the terms under which they could participate in government. The 1980 military coup triggered, under the auspices of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (TIS), a turning point in Turkish politics: the expansion of state-run religious services, the introduction of religious education as a compulsory subject in public schools, and the use of the Diyanet, the state agency for religious affairs, for the “promotion of national solidarity and integration”. These changes not only led to a nationalisation of Islam, but also to an Islamisation of the nation. The military granted Sunni Islam a discrete and important role in the country’s socio-political development; it was the “new” old source of legitimisation for the Kemalist state. Under the aegis of Prime Minister Turgut Özal an official revaluation of Islam as part of Turkish identity took place. The state was no longer regarded as a mere collection of institutions and agencies, but as the champion of a collective identity. Özal’s liberal economic and social policies promoted religious interest groups; the development of an Islamic business world and of the religious but pro-democratic “Anatolian bourgeoisie” is one of Özal’s main achievements. The rise of the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) is primarily owed to endogenous factors and would have been inconceivable without the ideological change at the highest level of the state under the influence of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis. The party operated – due to pressure from its coalition partner – within Turkey’s democratic and republican parameters. The RP’s era, however, did witness an Islamisation of the public sphere and a politicisation of religion. The “Process of February 28” led to a split in Necmettin Erbakan’s movement and

triggered ideological change in Turkish Islamism that has deepened its dynamic integration into parliamentary democracy. The reform-oriented wing of the Islamist movement succeeded in freeing itself from the ideology of the Welfare Party and in ushering in a post-Islamist phase. This wing became institutionalised in the conservative religious AKP. The AKP can be classified as a hybrid political group that represents a unique synthesis of reformism and conservatism that crosses class boundaries. Its spectacular victory in the 2002 parliamentary elections was not just a result of this ideological change but must also be regarded – just as in the case of the RP’s prior success in the light of socioeconomic problems. (Karakas, 2007, pp.2–3)

The AKP submitted a draft constitution to the ad hoc Constitutional Consensus Commission suggesting a dramatic political system change for Turkey in October 2012. In the proposal executive authority is bestowed upon the president who is responsible for domestic and international policies. He is also the head of state overseeing the implementation of constitution, and state organs’ proper and harmonic functioning. Presidential term is set for five years. One can only be elected for two terms; there is no need for it to be consecutive. Political parties having at least five percent of the votes in the last national election or at least 100 thousand people may nominate their candidate for presidency. Parliamentary election and presidential election have to be held on the same day every five years. (Boyunsuz, n.d., p.2)

Right-winger and Conservative people in Turkey have felt rejected from Turkish society for a long time. On the other hand, they have been quite angry with Kemalists. Both of sides have been claiming that they founded the country and they have a right to rule the country. Instead of taking joint action, both sides have been still accusing themselves of being somebody’s pawn. After AKP government particularly wins the election in 2011, Conservative and right wing parties and supporters said that they would make a civil constitution. Unfortunately it never happened. Because they wanted to hold the reins of power with the bureaucratic ways instead of democratic ways. Before we accept the presidential system, we have find an answers for these questions:

Why does Erdogan insists for presidential system that much?

Does he think the presidential system is the best system for future of Turkey?

Is Turkish democracy ready for being ruled by presidential system?

Especially the acts and political discourses of Erdogan recently cannot convince us to believe Erdogan is Democratic leader. Turkey has substantially a freedom of the press and Human rights problems. Although Turkey states any time that it is so willing in joining the EU, unfortunately Turks does otherwise. Primarily Turkey has to find a solutions for alleges of corruptions, freedom of press, detention of journalists. Beside that it has to stop using Syrian migrants for a trump card against EU and interfering with Syria internal affairs and also supporting some terrorist organisations. If Erdogan does these, he can convince everyone that he is aim in bringing democratic system into Turkey.

All Erdogan thinks is to bring the presidential system for holding the reins of power. Presidential system is the best way for him to hold reins of power and be only one leader of Turkey. Another substantial question:

If Erdogan's political intention is so clear, why do the most of people still support Erdogan?

Because Erdogan knows how to use Islam religion as trump card for election, he knows how conservative people feel rejected from the politics. When Erdogan is in a tight corner (Corruption, wrong policy against PKK, cooperation with ISIS, Gezi Parki Protests, Arrests of Journalists...) he alleged that EU, USA and Israel do not want Islamic leader. The 2013 protests in Turkey started in late May 2013, initially to contest the urban development plans to redevelop Istanbul-Gezi Park into a complex with new mosque and shopping centre. However, the character of the protests changed quite substantially when the Turkish police attacked protesters with considerable violence, and what started as an environmental protest to save 600 trees in Gezi Park quickly turned into a nation-wide political demonstration against Tayyip Erdogan and his government. Some of those hasty proclamations of a "Turkish Spring" concentrate on Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's increasingly anti-democratic and authoritarian ruling style, and compare Erdogan's rule with Mubarak's. Some others in the media debated whether the Taksim-Gezi Park protests could be compared to the protests against neoliberalism, such as the 15M movements in Spain, the anti-government protests in Greece, the "occupy" protests in Europe and the Americas. (Gökay and Xypolia, 2013, p.1)

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