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# Turkey's Democratization Process

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## Presentation

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## **Summary:**

Since the end of the 1980 coup d'état Turkey has been in the midst of a complex process of democratization. Applying methodological pluralism in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of this process in a Turkish context, the forthcoming book: 'Turkey's democratization process' (Routledge, 2013) brings together contributions from Turkish, English, French and Spanish scholars.

The book utilizes the theoretical framework of J. J. Linz and A. C. Stepan in order to assess the complex process of democratization in Turkey. This framework takes into account five interacting features of Turkey's polity when making this assessment, namely: whether the underlying legal and socioeconomic conditions are conducive for the development of a free and participant society; if a relatively autonomous political society exists; whether there are legal guarantees for citizens' freedoms; if there exists a state bureaucracy which can be used by a democratic government; and whether the type and pace of Turkish economic development contributes to this process.

Examining the Turkish case in light of this framework, this book seeks to combine analyses that will help assess the process of democratization and our aim is to introduce you to this academic work in order to listen to your comments, suggestions and criticisms.

**Key words:** Turkey, democratization, defective democracies.

## **Introduction:**

The seeds of this publication were planted in 2008 during the research seminar "Democracy and Democratization in Turkey" held 21–23 November in La Cristalera Residence Hall at the Autónoma University of Madrid. At that time, 14 academic experts from different fields covering Turkey's economy, culture, society and politics met under the aegis of the R&D&I project: "Political relations and human exchanges between Spain and the Muslim world" (1939–2004; SEJ2005–08867-C03–01/CPOL).

The points raised during these seminars were developed and extended first during the R&D project "Spain in the face of political reforms and migrations in the Mediterranean and the Muslim World" (2009–11; CSO2008–06232-c03–01/ cpol), then during the subsequent R&D project "The Arab-Islamic world in movement: migrations, reforms and elections and their impact on Spain" (CSO2011–29438-C05–01) and finally during a symposium held on 18 and 19 December 2009 at the Centre for Political and Constitutional Studies (CEPC) and the Círculo de Bellas Artes respectively, thanks to the public funding (Acción Complementaria) CSO2009–06186-E/SOCI. All of these projects were financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Science and Innovation.

## **Theoretical framework:**

Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle have singled out the different dimensions of an overall process of democratization: 'the breakdown of the previous regime<sup>1</sup> democratic transition, regime consolidation, and democratic persistence', specifically noting that the transition process 'entails the creation of the basic political institutions of a new democratic system and the drafting of new rules for regulating the political behaviour of citizens, organizations and governing elites' (1995: xii). This is what O'Donnell would call the first transition, from 'the previous authoritarian regime to the installation of a democratic government' (1989: 20). During this transition process, there are expectations, as Linz says, 'that political authority will soon be derived only from the free decision of an electorate' (1990: 28). This political moment is characterized by its uncertainty, and there is no unanimity in academia in terms of establishing the end of the transition process, which includes free non-fraudulent elections and usually also involves the establishment of a new, democratic constitutional framework (Linz 1990: 28), (Huneus 1994: 35). Linz and Stepan consider transition complete:

When sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de iure (Linz and Stepan 1996a: 3).

It follows, then, that the authors caution that it is possible for a democratic transition to remain incomplete, since there may be non-elected institutions, such as the army, that unlawfully control part of the political sovereignty or there may be such a high degree of disagreement between the elites and the majority of the population about the new democratic institutions that normal evolution and consolidation are impeded by a serious threat of illegitimacy (Linz and Stepan 1996a: 4). Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle also note in this respect that a transition 'may culminate in a new regime but that regime may not even be fully democratic' (Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995: 3).

This situation gives rise to serious disputes regarding the application of the concept of democratic consolidation to those regimes that do not possess the basic characteristics to be qualified as fully democratic. O'Donnell speaks of a second transition 'from this [democratic] government to the consolidation of democracy or, in other words, to the effective functioning of a democratic regime. I am speaking of political democracy (or polyarchy, according to Robert Dahl's useful and widely used definition)' (O'Donnell 1989: 20). Regarding democratic consolidation, Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle argue that 'democratic consolidation, as we define it, requests full conformity with all the criteria inherent in a demanding, multifaceted procedural definition of democracy' (Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995:3).

Also these authors suggested that the study of democratic consolidation is an even more

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<sup>1</sup> On the different paths to democratization, see: Stepan, A. (1986) 'Paths toward redemocratization: theoretical and comparative considerations', in G. O'Donnell, P. Schmitter, L. Whitehead (eds) *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, Comparative perspectives*, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press; Linz, J. J., and Stepan A. (1996) *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

complex phenomenon than that of transitions. The most recent research lines in this topic have focused on the actions of elites and on agency<sup>2</sup> while 'consolidation is much more complex and it involves a much larger number of actors in a wider array of political arenas' (Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995: 3).

Linz and Stepan clearly state that it is not possible to speak of democratic consolidation unless the following three conditions are met: the existence of a state; a democratic transition that has been brought to completion (this is not the case if the freely elected government cannot impose, either *de iure* or *de facto*, its authority in certain areas because of confrontations with 'authoritarian enclaves', 'reserve domains' or military 'prerogatives'); and finally, the implementation of a democratic government that respects the constitutional framework and fundamental rights and freedoms. The authors assert that 'only democracies can become consolidated democracies' (Linz and Stepan 1996b: 14).

Schedler is one of the authors who have made an exhaustive study of the use of the term 'democratic consolidation', analysing some of the difficulties in its application. For some academics, it connotes a process, while for others it implies a point of arrival, a result, a target. This author suggests that the meaning of this concept, termed 'nebulous' by Pridham (1995: 167), depends on our empirical viewpoints and 'the type of regime we want to avoid or attain' (according to our normative horizons) (Schedler 1997: 2). For Schedler, democratic consolidation (in accordance with other authors like O'Donnell (1996) and Schneider (1995), who had already made note of this) is 'indeed an intrinsically teleological concept' (Schedler 1997: 5). The author lists five concepts of democratic consolidation: avoiding democratic breakdown, avoiding democratic erosion, institutionalising democracy, completing democracy and deepening democracy.

If liberal democracies must face the challenge of preventing an 'erosion of democracy' then semidemocratic regimes<sup>3</sup> not only must prevent a regression to authoritarianism, but they must continue to push the evolution of the regime towards full democracy (Schedler 1998: 95). Moreover, for Schedler in semi-democracies which face the task of democratic completion, any talk about "the consolidation of democracy" is misleading. It suggests that a democratic regime is already in place (and only needs to be

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<sup>2</sup> Colomer, J. M. (1994) 'Teorías de la transición', *Revista de Estudios Políticos (Nueva Época)*, 86: 243–53 and Martí i Puig, S. (2001) 'Y después de las transiciones qué? Un balance y análisis de las teorías del cambio político', *Revista de Estudios Políticos (Nueva Época)* 13: 101–24.

<sup>3</sup> As Szmolka (2010:105–06, 117–18) notes

the processes of political change initiated in authoritarian countries during the latest upheavals in the third wave of democratization have not always resulted in forms of democratic government. In many cases, they have produced new types of authoritarianism or near-democratic regimes that may experience significant problems in the way in which their government functions. It is difficult to classify these countries using the classic categories of political regimes established by political science, which has traditionally differentiated between democratic, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes (Szmolka, 2010:105–06).

These new regimes have been conceptualised in different ways. As the author explains, some scholars use terms that emphasise the democratic element: 'façade democracie', "pseudo-democracies" (Finer, 1970), "semidemocracies" (Diamond, Linz, Lipset, 1995; Mainwaring, Brinks and Pérez Liñán, 2000), among others. Other academics have stressed the adjective "authoritarian". Examples of this include the terms "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky and Way, 2002) and "electoral authoritarianism" (Schedler, 2002 and 2006). Finally, Szmolka mentions authors who have used the category of "hybrid political regimes". Szmolka herself differentiates between "defective democracies" and "pluralist authoritarianism" within hybrid political regimes. For a compilation of the different definitions of hybrid regimes, see Diamond, L. (2002) 'Thinking About Hybrid Regimes', *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 21–35; Bogaards, M. (2009) 'How to classify hybrid regimes? Defective democracy and electoral authoritarianism', *Democratization*, 16(2): 399–423; Levitsky, S. and Way, L. (2002) 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism', *Journal of Democracy*, 13 (2): 51–65.

“consolidated”) when in fact the issue at hand is constructing a fully democratic regime (Schedler 1998: 99).

Merkel (2004) and Puhle (2005) use the term defective democracies to describe regimes that hold elections with a series of democratic requisites but that at the same time lack one or more of the characteristics shared by ‘embedded democracies’<sup>4</sup> The authors note four types of defective democracies: 1) Exclusive democracy, which contains criteria for excluding the suffrage of certain groups, usually based on questions of ethnicity, religion or gender. 2) Tutelary democracy, characterised by the existence of reserved domains outside the scope of democratically elected governments and veto players that may exercise their powers either by constitutional or extra-constitutional means, such as the military or oligarchic groups. 3) Delegative democracies, where ‘the mechanisms of horizontal accountability, the checks and balances between the different powers, are out of order’. In this case, for example, a lack of judicial independence would be one of its symptoms. 4) Illiberal democracy, where the practice of the rule of law does not work well, constitutional norms are not properly implemented and human rights and fundamental liberties are not guaranteed. Some cases of defective democracies have a mixed profile that combine the characteristics defining each category.

In a regime with a defective democracy, if what Schedler calls ‘completing democracy’ (1998: 95) is to be produced, some alteration must occur in the existing institutions and regulations that are impeding the development of a fully democratic regime. As Valenzuela (1990) has noted, the process of democratization in this case cannot be based on the ‘habituation, assimilation, or routine’ of these non-democratic institutions, but some alteration must occur in the existing institutions. This alteration can be encouraged by the political class or by civil society—not just internal groups, but also external actors.

This work studies the case of a particular defective democracy, Turkey, which is undergoing a democratization process whose ideal goal would be to accomplish a full democratic regime. The term ‘embedded democracies’ as defined by Wolfgang Merkel (2004) and the members of the ‘Defective Democracies’ research project is very useful

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<sup>4</sup> Dimensions, partial regimes and criteria of embedded democracy as defined in Merkel (2004):

I. Dimension of vertical legitimacy

- A) Electoral regime
  - 1. Elected officials
  - 2. Inclusive suffrage
  - 3. Right to candidacy
  - 4. Correctly organized, free and fair elections
- B) Political rights
  - 5. Press freedom
  - 6. Freedom of association

II. Dimension of liberal constitutionalism and rule of law

- C) Civil Rights
  - 7. Individual liberties from violations of own rights by state/private agents
  - 8. Equality before the law
- D) Horizontal accountability
  - 9. Horizontal separation of powers

III. Dimension of effective agenda control

- E) Effective power to rule
  - 10. Effective officials with effective right to rule

in terms of making the desired type of liberal democratic regime operational. This concept goes beyond other well-known definitions of democracy such as the one coined by Dahl as polyarchy in 1971. Still, it focuses on a specific and limited list of elements necessary to establish a democratic regime that can be taken separately, but that are also connected and mutually reinforcing.

Bearing in mind all of the positions, Linz and Stepan's theoretical framework (1996a) serves as a very useful analytical element to examine the process of democratization in Turkey at the present time, although this particular case is not one of democratic consolidation but about a prior stage. For these authors, consolidated democracies—within the essential framework of a sovereign state—have five interacting arenas in place that reinforce one another:

first, the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society; second, there must be a relatively autonomous and valued political society; third, there must be a rule of law to ensure legal guarantees for citizens' freedoms and independent associational life; fourth, there must be a state bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government; fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society (Linz and Stepan 1996a: 7).

The analysis in this book focuses on the evolution of these five arenas in the Turkish case. As noted there is some controversy regarding the use of the term democratic consolidation for regimes that are not fully democratic. However, this book starts from the premise that the arenas defined by Linz and Stepan to analyze problems of democratic transitions and consolidation are equally valid for the analysis of democratization processes in defective democracies.

In conclusion, the challenge before us is to analyze the processes of democratization that do not fully correspond to either the concept of transition or the concept of consolidation. The starting point is a regime that holds elections that meet a minimum of the democratic criteria for pluralism, inclusivity and transparent, open and contested elections, but which nonetheless have severe restrictions in other spheres, such as the existence of reserved domains, serious problems in the implementation of the separation of powers and their reciprocal control, and severe restrictions in the spheres of political and civil rights. We agree with Schedler when he asserts that if these political regimes are undergoing a democratization process, this process entails 'democratic completion' and is not about consolidating the current features of the regime (1998: 95–96).

### **Structure of the book**

The analysis of the process of Turkish democratization presented in this book is designed, on the one hand, to study the recent democratic evolution not only in the Turkish political institutional arena, but also in other spheres, as defined in Linz and Stepan's classic work *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (1996a: 7–15).<sup>5</sup> Using Schedler's (1998) concept, Turkey would be deep in a process that could be called 'completing democracy' and the theoretical framework advanced by Linz and Stepan make it possible to analyze the complexity of this process in all its dimensions.

If Linz and Stepan (1996a:7) consider that democratic consolidation requires much more than 'elections and markets', it is essential to begin with a sovereign state. For this reason, the second chapter of the book is dedicated to the historical context of the

formation of the Turkish nation-state. Linz and Stepan distinguish state-building from nation-building and discuss the conflicts that may arise during the evolution of these two differentiated concepts and the impact that they can have on processes of democratization: 'Whereas a state can exist on the basis of external conformity with its rules, a nation requires some internal identification' (Linz and Stepan 1996a:22). Democratic policies that emerge in the context of state-making tend to emphasise an inclusive and extensive citizenry that guarantees the equality of individual rights to citizens. On the contrary, a nation-state policy may be in serious opposition to this process of democratization if it pursues greater cultural homogeneity using repressive measures (Linz and Stepan 1996a: 25). These questions are discussed by Ibrahim Saylan in 'The formation of citizenship in Turkey'. Following this, Ilter Turan in 'Two steps forward one step back: Turkey's democratic transformation' reviews the development of both authoritarian and democratic trends in the Turkish regime since the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, thus positioning the reader in the present day. An analysis of the international context rounds out these pieces. The outbreak of the Arab revolts has created a new situation in the region. Much speculation has been made as well about the possible influence that Turkey might have on the new regimes that are emerging, as a possible political and social model to follow. Conversely, it is essential to consider the effect that the revolts may have on Turkish internal politics, either by encouraging the democratization process with the push that may come from their spread or the so-called spirit of the times, as suggested by Linz and Stepan (1996a: 75–76), or by contributing negatively to it. This negative contribution could be due to the fact that the political instability occurring in the countries sharing borders with Turkey could intensify concerns for national security that go against democratization trends and the promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms. More time will have to pass before these recent influences can be evaluated, while other longer-term ones can be given a more unhurried and profound analysis. In Chapter 4, 'The international context of democratic reform in Turkey', William Hale takes a close look at the effect that interaction with European and transatlantic organizations and countries has had on the process of Turkish democratization.

These three chapters, then, introduce and provide context for the five relevant interconnected arenas defined by Linz and Stepan (which in this case are equally useful for the analysis of democratization processes in defective democracies). The first section includes articles relating to political society. Political parties are key actors since they carry out essential work when it comes to agreeing on the rules of the democratic game and their implementation. Chapter 5 by Sabri Sayarı, 'Party system and democratic consolidation in Turkey: problems and prospects', analyses the development of the Turkish party system. More specifically, Isık Gürleyen's Chapter 6, 'What did they promise for democracy and what did they deliver?: the AKP and the CHP 2002–11 aims to analyse the specific proposals made by the political parties to promote democratic reforms and the expansion of fundamental rights and freedoms. The section dedicated to civil society features articles by Fuat Keyman and Tuba Kancı, Pinar I lkkaracan and Marcus Graf. Chapter 7 by Fuat Keyman and Tuba Kancı, 'Democratic consolidation and civil society in Turkey' analyses Turkish civil society's organisational capacity and the way in which civil society organisations approach democracy. Pinar I lkkaracan takes up the role of Turkish women's movements in the democratization process of Turkish society in Chapter 8, 'Democratization in Turkey from a gender perspective'. Finally, Chapter 9 by Marcus Graf, 'The Istanbul Art Scene – A Social System?', reflects on art's various functions for the palace, the state and the public and

pays special attention to the interconnection between artistic and social developments in Turkey.

The third major arena analysed focuses on the intersection between citizens and the idea of social justice as explained by Mine Eder in Chapter 10, 'Deepening neo-liberalisation and the changing welfare regime in Turkey: mutations of a populist, "sub-optimal" democracy'.

The fourth arena examined in the book includes an analysis of the functioning of the state apparatus. This segment includes the new public administration, the military, the judiciary and the perceptions that citizens have about corruption and the tax system in the country. Süleyman Sözen in his Chapter 11 'New public administration in Turkey' explains the substantial legal and structural changes that the Turkish public administration has undergone in the last few years in line with the democratization process in the country. Chapter 12 by Ali Çarkoğlu and Fikret Adaman: 'Determinants of tax evasion by households: evidence from Turkey' however, offers a different point of view, drawing on political culture. As a study of administrative efficiency, this piece analyses the perception that Turkish citizens have of tax evasion. Yaprak Gürsoy, in turn, in chapter 13, 'From tutelary powers and interventions to civilian control: An overview of Turkish civil-military relations since the 1920s', provides an overview of Turkish civil-military relations primarily focusing on the post-1980 era, looking at whether or not military power is being superseded by civil power. Finally in this section, Ergun Özbudun in Chapter 14, 'The judiciary', reviews the current situation of this state power in Turkey, taking into account the developments fostered by the reforms requested by the EU.

The last arena analysed corresponds to the rule of law about which Linz and Stepan have stated: a rule of law embodied in a spirit of constitutionalism is an indispensable condition. A spirit of constitutionalism requires more than rule by majoritarianism. It entails a relatively strong consensus over the constitution and especially a commitment to 'self-binding' procedures of governance that require exceptional majorities to change (Linz and Stepan 1996a: 10). The rule of law must guarantee and promote the development of a democratic regime and the defence of fundamental rights and liberties. In this respect, Chapter 15, by Ergun Özbudun, 'Democracy, tutelarism, and the search for a new constitution' is essential to understand the importance of the new Turkish constitutional process and the difficulties it faces. Senem Aydın in Chapter 16, 'Human rights in Turkey', provides an overview of the state of human rights in Turkey in the 1990s, followed by an account of the EU-induced reform process that accelerated in the 1999–2005 period. Aysen Candas, Bilgen and Hakan Yılmaz in Chapter 17, 'The paradox of equality: subjective attitudes towards basic rights in Turkey' evaluate and contextualize the attitudes of Turkey's constituency with regard to basic rights from the perspective of political culture. Dilek Kurban focuses on the Kurdish issue, one of the most relevant topics influencing the democratization process in Turkey. Chapter 18 'The Kurdish question: law, politics and the limits of recognition', presents a systematic overview of the legal framework affecting the rights and freedoms of the Kurdish population in the Turkish political system and pays special attention to the current claims of the Kurdish population and whether or not the legal changes are reflecting them. On the current situation of the minorities recognised by the Lausanne Treaty, Samim Akgönül, in Chapter 19, 'Non-Muslim minorities in the Turkish democratization process', has written about the main constraints these groups face, their demands and

aspirations and the political response up to now. Elise Massicard, on the other hand, aims to analyse the question of democratization from the Alevi perspective in Chapter 20, 'Democratization in Turkey? Insights from the Alevi issue'. This piece pays special attention to the evolution not only of the legal framework affecting their rights, but also to the integration of Alevis in the political process, in particular to the Alevist movement that appeared in the late 1980s. Ceren Sözeri in Chapter 21, 'The political economy of the media and its impact on freedom of expression in Turkey', looks at the situation of freedom of expression, a key issue concerning all democratization processes. Organisations such as Reporters Without Borders have noted a negative evolution in this area, since Turkey, which ranked 123 on the world ranking of freedom of expression in 2009, fell to 138 in 2010. Indeed, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg also expressed his concern in this respect in a report published in April 2011. Finally, the book ends with Chapter 22 'Some observations on Turkey's democratization process' in order to bring together the main ideas from the different chapters and propose some lines of analysis that can contribute to the study of the democratization processes in countries with defective democracies.

### **The Turkish case:**

Turkey is in the midst of a process of democratization. The political regime that emerged after the 1980 coup d'état produced a defective democracy of an illiberal and tutelary nature. Since the first elections held after the coup in 1983, Turkey has undergone important transformations during which – for both internal and external reasons – the regime's democratization process has advanced. The most important of the external causes, of course, is Turkey's candidacy for EU membership, which was solidly promoted by the 1999 Helsinki European Council, resulting in the opening of negotiations between Ankara and Brussels in October 2005. The EU's influence has been notable, especially because it came to serve as a catalyst at a specific point in time for a broad political and social spectrum, contributing to a consensus in favour of far-reaching political reforms. Turkey's candidacy to the EU and the need to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria fostered a deeper overall review of the Turkish political system. Until that time, advances in democratization had been characterized by piecemeal reforms. Indeed, the regime that resulted from the 1980 coup d'état did undergo changes and experience a slow, progressive return to electoral normalcy. However, it did not manage to fulfill all of the criteria supposedly inherent in a liberal democracy, according to the terminology of embedded democracies put forth by Merkel (2004).

The book makes it clear that, as in the Chilean case, Turkey underwent an incomplete transition, since the military maintained prerogatives in the political sphere that allowed it to have the final say in the regime and held on to key spheres of power which were, furthermore, protected by the 1982 Turkish Constitution. All of this resulted in a defective democracy that was tutelary (controlled by the military establishment) and illiberal (in which there were severe limitations on the exercise of public freedoms and fundamental rights and the effective rule of law). However, especially in recent years, important transformations have taken place in this defective democracy. How should this process of transformation and change be analyzed? We have chosen to use the theoretical framework of democratic consolidation, while qualifying that in Turkey, a process of democratic consolidation *per se* is not taking place. As a brief summary of

the book's conclusions we would like to mention here that the Turkish democratization process has experienced ups and downs, moments of acceleration and deadlocks. The Turkish political class at this time has unparalleled room to maneuver with respect to earlier periods after having limited the power of the military considerably. However, there is an important lack of unity between the parties in terms of objectives and the reach of legislative reforms related to the democratization process. The shortcomings in the process of adopting a new constitution after the 2011 elections are indicative of this.

The AKP has won three consecutive victories that have given it solid absolute majorities in parliament and made it the predominant party on the Turkish political spectrum. The risk inherent in this situation is that although the AKP is replacing the former political and state elite, it may continue and further develop the previous authoritarian attitudes instead of removing them altogether.

The political opposition, in turn, has an important responsibility to contribute positively to the democratization process, make proposals, check and balance the government and voice different demands from civil society. Although the MHP has always been characterized by its ultranationalist and conservative discourse, the CHP, as the leading opposition party and the only party that can occupy the centre-left position at this time, has a clear role to play in demanding fundamental rights and freedoms. The BDP could increase its impact notably, not only if it plays a constructive role in resolving the Kurdish conflict, but also if it mounts a comprehensive defense of fundamental rights and freedoms not only applied to the Kurdish population, which would broaden its base.

Although the political class has an extremely important role in the democratization process, civil society must be given the space to organize and articulate its demands independently. Democratization cannot be understood as only a top-down process in Turkey at this time.

The demonstrations and protests that emerged around Gezi Park and Taksim Square in Istanbul and extended to other parts of the country in May and June 2013, could signify a turning point in this sense. Numerous analysts and academics such as Nilüfer Göle, Ihsan Dagı or Edhem Eldem, have pointed out in different national and international news media like Radikal Gazetesi, Today's Zaman, T24 or the New York Times, the enormous relevance and novelty of the phenomenon for Turkish politics.

The protests have constituted a break in Turkey's political trajectory, putting civil society at centre-stage in a country where major political and social transformations are usually managed by the ruling elite. The demands and discontent of protesters have touched on a variety of issues, among which criticism of an economic model that is leading to a breakneck gentrification of the city of Istanbul, by dint of exclusionary urban growth and privatization that is not readily compatible with sustainability criteria. Aside from the demands concerning Gezi Park and other specific demands such as the release of those detained in that period, the constant reference in the protests to shortcomings in the area of freedom of speech must be mentioned. It is important to emphasize that the people gathered in the country's squares have demanded respect of their own individual freedom, but also that of "others" – a highly relevant phenomenon in a country that has witnessed sharp ethnic and religious polarization. The protests have galvanized such disparate sectors of society as anti-capitalist Muslims, feminists, leftist groups, artists, LGTB movements, Armenians, Kurds, Turks, Alevis, Sunnis,

veiled and unveiled women, pensioners, students, workers and even the supporters of the traditionally arch-rival clubs Besiktas, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe. Their discontent has not been leveled at other sectors of society, but instead against the policies of what is perceived to be an increasingly high-handed government.

While Taksim, Gezi and the rest of the protests across Turkey have been something new, the response of the AKP and the executive however, has been qualified in successive analyses as a repetition of the past – the Turkish elite's timeworn reflex of responding to mobilizations with violence by the state security forces and with further restrictions in the area of human rights and freedoms.

The prime minister has meanwhile opted to polarize society through the speeches he has given to packed audiences at improvised rallies convened by his party to undermine the protests and stir up support. In these speeches, Tayyip Erdogan has accused the protesters of participating in an international plot to destabilize the country, and drawn a line between his supporters and his opponents, who he has criticized moreover, for their lack of religious belief, thereby making a distinction between good and bad citizens.

His detractors are, according to the prime minister's vision, thereby excluded from the body politic (Polity)<sup>5</sup>. Looking ahead to future elections, the AKP would seem to have lost points in polls of voter intentions<sup>6</sup>, but it is noteworthy that the CHP, the main opposition voiced in citizen mobilizations, even if it has made symbolic advances toward the protesters' demands, roundly criticized the police repression and some of its members of parliament have played an active part in the protests<sup>7</sup>. The BDP for its part has also repeatedly condemned the police brutality against the protesters and several of its members of parliament such as Sırrı Süreyya Önder have played a key role at Taksim. The Kurdish political movement has opted to keep a low profile in case its active participation be used as an excuse to sabotage the ongoing peace process (Küçükkeles, 2013). The leader of the MHP has for his part outright rebuked the executive's approach and said of the AKP: "The party that does not accept democracy has nothing more to offer"<sup>8</sup>.

It will take some time however, until it becomes clear to what extent the events of May and June will make an impact on the opposition parties as regards their proposals for democratization and how they join forces with civil society.

At the international level, the EU has lost considerable leverage over the Turkish democratization process as compared with previous periods. Full adherence is a distant

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<sup>5</sup> Basbakan Erdoğan Kazlıçeşme'de konuştu [Prime Minister Erdoğan speaks in Kazlıçeşme ], CNN Türk, 17 June 2013. Online. Available

HTPP: <<http://www.cnntrk.com/2013/turkiye/06/16/basbakan.erdogan.kazlicesmede.konustu/711858.0/index.html>> (accessed 4 July 2013). "Police lock down Taksim, PM shows off in Istanbul," Hurriyet Daily News, June 16 2013. Online. Available HTPP: <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com>>

<sup>6</sup> "Survey reveals growing public apprehension over democratic process," Today's Zaman, 16 June 2013. Online. Available HTPP: <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318446-survey-reveals-growing-public-apprehension-over-democratic-process.html>> (accessed 4 July 2013).

<sup>7</sup> "CHP moves for freedom of expression law reforms," Hurriyet Daily News, 27 June 2013. Online. Available HTPP: <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/chpmoves-for-freedom-of-expression-law-reforms.aspx?pageID=238&nID=49547&NewsCatID=338>> (accessed 4 July 2013).

<sup>8</sup> "Opposition leader says Turkish PM has become twitter police," Hurriyet Daily News, 25 June 2013. Online. Available HTPP: <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opposition-leader-bahceli-says-turkish-pm-has-become-the-twitter-police.aspx?PageID=238&NID=49427&NewsCatID=338>> (accessed 4 July 2013).

and uncertain objective and Brussels' declarations on Turkish internal politics during the protests have not been welcomed. Turkey's prime minister reacted to the European Parliament's 12 June resolution condemning the repression of the demonstrations, retorting that he did not recognize that institution's resolutions and comparing the Turkish police's actions against demonstrators to that of police forces in other European countries<sup>9</sup>.

By the same token, the impact of regime changes in neighboring countries remains to be seen. Turkey's role as a regional power, its positioning in balances of power in the region and the Turkish elite's own perception of the issue will affect its internal politics. The evolution of the conflicts taking place on its borders will in turn give rise to different scenarios with hugely relevant effects. Proof of this, is the existence of a Kurdish autonomous entity in Northern Iraq and the possibility that in a near future similar decentralized systems be set up in neighboring countries – something that would inevitably have an impact on the perspectives and demands of Turkey's Kurdish population.

Turkey is embedded in a process of change. If the country's democratization process concludes unsuccessfully, Turkey runs the risk of passing from being a defective democracy managed by the military, with severely limited rights and freedoms, to being another type of defective democracy, this time delegative. One in which, once again rights and freedoms are acutely limited, but where the executive is not obliged to subject itself to excessive constitutional provisions and its exercise of power is hardly limited by the legislative or judiciary. The outcome of the process still remains to be seen and it will depend on the positive interaction between the five arenas analyzed in this book.

To conclude we would like to underscore how reflecting on democracy in Turkey invites wider reflection on the evolution of democratic processes in other parts of the world. The wave of protests burgeoning on different continents (including in what are considered consolidated democracies) – each in a particular context and with specific demands – are evidence of discontent with the limitations and defects of the political system and, in some cases also, of an economic model that gives rise to greater social inequalities and is ecologically unsustainable. In the majority of these cases, demonstrators are calling for more democracy, more transparency, more citizen participation and more political accountability in their political regimes. As political systems go, representative democracy with universal suffrage is still quite a recent form of government in historical terms. As many academics and analysts point out, there is a need to keep reflecting on its deepening and improvement – limiting democratic practice to holding elections does not seem to suffice. If we take up the legacy of the social contract theorists and envisage democracy as a governing contract between the citizens and their governors, this contract has fine print and requires a detailed and comprehensive revision so as to avoid unfair terms.

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<sup>9</sup> "I don't recognize European Parliament decision, Turkish PM Erdogan says," Hurriyet Daily News, June 13 2013. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/i-dont-recognize-european-parliament-decision-turkish-pm-erdogan-says.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48730&NewsCatID=338>> (accessed 4 July 2013).

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