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# Understanding Turkey's democratic breakdown: old vs. new and indigenous vs. global authoritarianism

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## ABSTRACT

Turkey's 'authoritarian turn' in recent years indicates a democratic breakdown that can best be analysed by analytically distinguishing between two simultaneous developments. The first is the reproduction of Turkey's long-existing semi-democratic regime – which the article calls old authoritarianism – in a new historical and dominant political-ideological context and under an Islamist-leaning government. The second is the emergence of a new type of authoritarianism – dubbed new authoritarianism – that is in many respects unprecedented for Turkey, is in need of better comprehension and displays important parallels with contemporary troubles of democracy in the world. Focusing on political society and institutions is insufficient to adequately examine the emergent authoritarian regime, for example to identify it as a regime type, to explain its popular support and to foresee how durable and repressive, and to what extent party-based rather than personalistic, it may become. It is necessary to combine insights from the new political economy of welfare, transition and communication with those from political and institutional democratization. Doing so suggests that new authoritarianism generates a new kind of state-society relationship where, paradoxically, political power becomes simultaneously more particularistic, personalized and mass-based. Hence, new authoritarianism has democratizing potential, but can also become more oppressive than any other regime Turkey has previously experienced. Oscillation between these two outcomes is also possible.

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## 1. Introduction

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the predominant view among scholars of Turkey was that, despite the continuation of important democratic deficits and red flags, the country was successfully democratizing and was on its way to become consolidated pluralistic democracy. In fact, Turkey was held up as a potential model for other Muslim-majority countries. With the beginning of the second decade, these optimistic assessments began to be replaced with growing scepticism. In recent years, an expanding body of studies, which will be reviewed below, has argued that Turkey is shifting towards authoritarianism.

But what kind of an authoritarian shift or democratic reversal is Turkey experiencing? Is this yet another of the many reversals the country has suffered during its long and checkered democratic transition since – at least – the 1950s? (Rodriguez et al. 2014). Is it thus reverting to its long-existing regime of partial democracy ‘with an adjective’, (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Merkel 2004) perhaps the main qualitative difference from the previous reversals being that this time it is occurring under an explicitly Islamist-leaning government? Alternatively, should we conclude that the authoritarian shift represents a complete democratic breakdown and the emergence of a new type of authoritarian regime? If so, what will be the nature of this new regime and how stable and durable can it be? What are the prospects, if any, for a return to democratization?

As I will review below, most studies conceptualize Turkey’s authoritarian turn in terms of its decades-old, and widely analysed, semi-democratic regime. Hence, the shift to authoritarianism is argued to result, for example, from the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) as a predominant party within the parameters and dynamics of this regime (Kalaycioglu 2010; Müftüler-Baç and Fuat Keyman 2012; Gumuscu 2013; Ayan Musil 2014). Hence, these studies analyse authoritarianism mainly as some kind of a resurgence or reproduction of Turkey’s long-existing authoritarian features, while paying due attention to some new ideological features based on the Islamic orientation of the ruling AKP, and, sometimes exclusively, the personality and worldview of its leader President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

In turn, a growing body of other studies maintains that what Turkey is undergoing amounts to a complete democratic breakdown and a transition from semi-democracy to a new type of political regime such as competitive authoritarianism under a hegemonic party (Somer 2014b; Başkan 2015; Esen and Gumuscu 2016).<sup>1</sup> In support of this view, these analyses rightly highlight developments such as the erosion of the institutional checks on the executive power, the weakening of the distinctions between state and party, government restrictions of civic freedoms and the skewing of the electoral playing field in favour of the incumbent party.

As I will discuss below, Turkey’s recent shift to authoritarianism indeed features many elements of what may be called its ‘old authoritarian regime’ in reference to its semi-democratic political system with military-bureaucratic tutelage. Thus, its authoritarian turn can partially be described and explained as an Islamist-leaning government and charismatic-populist leader reproducing its long-existing authoritarian habits and institutions with some new Islamist ideological prerogatives.

I argue in this article, however, that thinking about Turkey’s recent trajectory in this way would mean missing crucial elements of its contemporary challenges. This is because the country’s current democratic breakdown and authoritarian makeover also entail the emergence of a new kind of authoritarianism, which I will label ‘new authoritarianism’ or ‘the new authoritarian regime’. The latter is in many respects novel and unprecedented for Turkey and is in need of better comprehension and theorization. Many of these novel dimensions are ‘new’ also in the sense that – in addition to having indigenous origins – they display important parallels and seem to interact with the contemporary trends and troubles of democratic governance in the world.<sup>2</sup> Recent research has had difficulties in understanding and conceptualizing Turkey’s new authoritarian regime because researchers have tried to analyse a (partially) new phenomenon in terms of ‘old’ categories and based on an inadequate conceptualization of Turkey’s previous democratic transitions.

I will further maintain that in order to properly understand and theorize the new authoritarianism, it is insufficient to focus on changes in political society and institutions, as extant critical research has so far done. Political and institutional changes are, of course, critical to identifying and explaining the democratic breakdown and are important to be studied in their own right. But some deep-cutting causes of the breakdown and the major clues to understanding the nature of the emergent regime may lie in fundamental transformations occurring in economic and informational societies. These may have structural and lasting impacts on state–society relations, thus enabling and sustaining the changes in political society. Researching these fields is also important so as to foresee how stable and durable new authoritarianism may be and to what extent it may become party-based (versus personal-patrimonial) – and whether it has any democratizing potential.

Examining the new political economy of welfare, transition and communication, as I do below, helps to address a critical question that scholars investigating Turkey’s authoritarian turn need to answer. This question pertains to the popularity of new authoritarianism, which, after all, is led – if not produced – by an elected government. While it is true that recent elections in Turkey have been far from ‘free and fair’ and the playing field has heavily favored the ruling AKP, it is also true that the AKP and President Erdogan seem to be highly popular among major segments of society. They enjoy massive and highly mobilized constituencies. What explains this apparent popularity of an increasingly authoritarian government?

While I do not pretend to offer a full answer to this last question in this article, I hypothesize that the political–economic and informational undercurrents of the new authoritarianism may be key components of an explanation. I build on the existing literature and evidence and produce a number of theses to be explored by further theoretical and empirical research. In doing so, I also try to bring together prior and comparative work on political economy, communication and democratization.

The changes in the areas of political economy and communication seem to generate a new kind of state–society relationship. This new relation necessitates the government to weaken democratic institutions while at the same generating the belief among the government’s constituencies that the continuation of the benefits they enjoy as citizens depends on a particular party and particular politicians, and on the active ability of the citizens to keep these in power, rather than on state institutions. As a result, and paradoxically, wide segments of society enjoy a new sense of inclusion, empowerment and agency, but are nevertheless induced to seeing their unequal relationship with the government as unchangeable, and the ruling party and particular political personalities as indispensable.

In other words, political power becomes simultaneously more particularistic, personalized and mass-based. This implies that new authoritarianism could become more durable and oppressive than any other authoritarian regime Turkey experienced in the past. Meanwhile, however, it also generates a potential for democratization. This happens because previously passive constituencies are now being mobilized, and may be in the process of becoming more active citizens with political agency. At least they seem to be in the process of perceiving themselves as such. These newly activated groups may over time join others and demand truly democratic institutions. Hence, paradoxically, new authoritarianism can in the long run give birth to either a more firmly rooted democracy or an even more repressive regime. Oscillation between these two outcomes is also possible.

## 2. The endurance of Turkey's old authoritarianism

In a nutshell, the still partially prevailing old authoritarian regime of Turkey is based on a certain state tradition and particular set-up of the state–society relationship. The state and the ruling state elites – whoever they are in a particular period – harbour unequal, top-down transformative and ‘dismissive’<sup>3</sup> power over society.<sup>4</sup> These powers are exercised via a series of intrusive-authoritarian and insufficiently accountable institutions. The most salient example of these institutions has been the armed forces. In the background, however, numerous other institutions play crucial roles to reproduce old authoritarianism, some important current examples being the Council of Higher Education, the Presidency of Religious Affairs and, pending more discussion below, the Judiciary. Furthermore, the ruling elites who control these institutions are either unwilling or unable to seek consensus with rival elites in opposition. It might be fruitful to conceptualize all this as the influence of ‘history’ (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010) in Turkey’s democratization because in their foundational moments these institutions were mainly built unilaterally, with little broad-based elite or popular consensus (McLaren and Cop 2011; Somer 2014a, 2016).

The *forms* of these institutions and the balance of power between them have undergone many and important alterations over time. The concomitant development of such important principles – if not always their actual implementation – as national sovereignty, division of powers, secularism and electoral democracy have undoubtedly been extremely significant in their own ways as well. Nevertheless, the core of old authoritarianism, i.e. the operational logic of the governing institutions in terms of exercising top-down power to control, categorize, transform and ostensibly modernize society ‘for the people regardless of the people’ has not necessarily changed. The possible historical-sociological, cultural and structural roots and causes of old authoritarianism require better understanding but are outside the scope of this article.<sup>5</sup>

In the light of the insufficiently interrogated theories of democratic transition, many scholars explicitly or implicitly examined Turkey as a case that had completed a democratic transition – depending on each analyst’s evaluation – either in 1987–1991 or in 1997–2002.<sup>6</sup> Turkey had its first free and fair multiparty elections in 1950. Civilian competitive politics was, however, challenged soon afterwards by elected government majoritarianism. It was then interrupted by the military coup of 1960, after which military tutelage and periodic interventions were institutionalized. However, these ‘old’ military interventions – from which the July 2016 military coup attempt appears to have significantly differed – were mainly aimed at ‘protecting’ and resuscitating the secular-Turkish and developmental republican regime based in old authoritarianism, which was established during the 1920s and 1930s. Hence, in accordance with its self-identification as the guardian of modernization, the military by its own volition resumed multiparty elections after each intervention. These returns to multiparty politics indeed resembled democratic transitions.

But closer inspection reveals that the application of the concept of ‘transition’ to the Turkish case is problematic. Democratic transition theories were predominantly shaped by examples of third wave democratization such as Spain and Chile (O’Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Przeworski 1988; Linz and Stepan 1996). The ‘transitology’ perspective has been criticized for a variety of reasons (Carothers 2002). The approach is less problematic in cases of ‘pacted transitions’ – which many third wave democratizations were – where autocratic rule ends as a result of a more or less clear-cut agreement between the elites of

the old regime and the opposition. This makes it easier to identify when the transition ends. The completion of a transition could happen for example when the new rules of politics are established with the declaration of a multiparty accord or with the making of a new constitution based on broad-based compromise and consensus.

Turkey is a case where pact-building, ‘consensual rule-making’ and ‘explicit and formal compromises’ among rival actors have been comparatively weak (McLaren and Cop 2011; Somer 2014a). This can also be considered as a feature of its old authoritarianism since it reflects how its political elites have had the tendency to ‘dismiss’, i.e. deny the existence and legitimacy of each other and the societal segments that each other represents (Somer 2016). This is not to say that consensus-based democratic changes have been absent.<sup>7</sup> But such episodes were relatively short-lived and interrupted; major transformations and institutional makeovers almost always reflected the preferences and more or less unilateral actions and decisions of hegemonic actors. Typically, those in power dictated the new rules by excluding others, even when these new rules were meant to be, and in some cases were, inclusive and formally pro-democratic.

Hence, both the mainly liberal-democratic constitution of 1961 and the predominantly anti-liberal, conservative and nationalist constitution of 1982 were prepared by bodies that were chosen by the military. They represented some segments of society at the expense of others, depending on the ideological convictions of the juntas at the time. Furthermore, in both cases, the military made sure to legalize its veto powers and institutionalize its continuing influence in politics. Hence, even though Turkey went back to free and fair elections after the 1987 elections, elected governments did not have full autonomy from military tutelage. The armed forces exercised their privileges and ‘fine-tuned’ civilian politics periodically via explicit and implicit interventions.

Furthermore, two other fundamental flaws of Turkey’s democracy, the inability to integrate into the political system ethnic (mainly Kurdish) and religious (mainly Islamist) political actors ‘with their own chosen identities and representatives’ could not be addressed during these apparent transitions (Somer 2016). Hence, even if one could talk about democratic transitions, these were not fully experienced by and did not apply to major segments of the population (and in the case of the Kurds) to major parts of the country’s territory. In other words, even if one continues to use the transitology terminology, these transitions should be understood as demographically, institutionally and territorially partial or incomplete.

All of these observations and considerations lead one to conclude that Turkey had an incomplete democratic transition during the 1980s (Rodriguez et al. 2014). This made it misleading to talk about issues of democratic consolidation during the 2000s because ‘only democracies can become consolidated democracies’ (Linz and Stepan 1996; Merkel 2004). Arguably, the popularity of ‘electoralism’ in democratization studies also helped to downplay the democratic deficits in how Turkey resumed competitive politics after military interventions. Electoralism assumes that democratic consolidation can be jumpstarted in developing democracies by ushering in competitive politics based on free and fair elections (Lindberg 2009; Møller and Skaaning 2013). Hence, the highly competitive nature of Turkish party politics, and, until recent years, the successful conduct of free and fair elections in the context of a vibrant and partially free media, gave the impression that Turkey had already accomplished a transition to democracy and that its main challenges were those of democratic consolidation.

The ruling AKP came to power at the end of 2002 with the support of people who voted for the party for various cultural and pragmatic reasons (Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu 2009; Çarkoğlu 2012). At the same time, many of these people felt that they were among the primary victims of old authoritarianism, which the AKP promised to dismantle. As I will discuss in some examples below, various contributions in current research have shown how the AKP has ultimately failed to overcome old authoritarianism, while duly noting the democratic changes and reforms in selected areas.<sup>8</sup> A major reason for this failure might be that Turkish Islamists have for historical-institutional reasons developed a mental-ideological prioritization of ‘conquering rather than democratizing’ state institutions (Somer, *forthcoming*). Thus, they were not predisposed and mentally prepared to reform the intrusive and unaccountable state institutions. The unequal nature of the state–society relationship and the tendency of the political elite to seek hegemony rather than consensus have endured (Somer 2016).

At the same time, a new type of authoritarianism has been developing under the AKP, which has been difficult for scholarship to recognize and conceptualize. In the light of transition theories, signs of authoritarianism were primarily interpreted as vestiges of the *pre-transition* ancient regime (often labelled as Kemalist), which Turkey was hoped to address during the consolidation phase of democratization.

In fact, there is a disappointing lack of clarity in recent research even on the fundamental question of whether Turkey should still be considered a democracy based on minimum standards. Depictions in recent studies range from ‘experiencing problems of democratic consolidation’ and ‘authoritarian tendencies of the government’ to the rise of ‘delegative democracy’ and ‘competitive authoritarianism’. At least the last one of these labels refers to a categorically non-democratic regime type, while the others can be included under the rubric of ‘democracies with adjectives’ (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Merkel 2004). Similarly, descriptions of the AKP have ranged in recent years from ‘Islam-friendly’ to ‘political Islamist’ and ‘authoritarian-Islamist’. Clearly, the last two descriptions, especially the latter, have very different implications for the existence and survival of democracy than the first one.

### 3. How does recent research depict new authoritarianism?

Table 1 is intended to give examples of current scholarship to illustrate several points. By no means does it offer a comprehensive review of recent contributions. First, many recent studies have employed the framework of ‘transition’ and ‘consolidation’ in analysing Turkey’s political changes, even though they in one way or another identified democratic deficits that seemed to be deeper and more enduring than mere challenges of democratic consolidation. I included studies referring to the emergence of a predominant political party system in this category because they do not necessarily argue the emergence of unprecedented structural, institutional or cultural sources and practices of authoritarianism. Instead, they focus on the changing balance of power between the political parties (Ciddi and Esen 2014). This could be explained for example by the AKP’s superior economic performance and ability to minimize intra-party conflicts compared to the Justice Party of the 1960s (Ayan Musil 2014). Hence, these contributions highlight known authoritarian practices, such as patronage, that might have reached a higher level of intensity because the AKP has concentrated more power, while also ‘adopting more diverse techniques’ in distributing benefits (Ibid., 2014, 84). As I will argue below, however, these different techniques may have crucial

**Table 1.** Examples of recent research with respect to old and new authoritarianism.

Shift to authoritarianism as the continuation or reproduction of an old political regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shift to the right ('tide of rising conservatism') of the Turkish electorate since the 1980s (Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu 2009)</li> <li>• AKP is 'set on the road' to fail to contribute to democratic consolidation. 'Moderate' voters vote for the AKP for economic performance and party identification but party elites with 'immaculate Islamist credentials' harbour a more religious agenda &amp; interpret electoral success as the latter's endorsement; AKP not intent to seek national compromise over polarizing issues (Kalaycıoğlu 2010)</li> <li>• Failure to become a fully functioning democracy. Reasons contrasted with Spain and Greece: 'absence and no memory of extremely repressive regime'; 'elite consensual disunity'. Additionally: 'opposition intransigence toward the AKP in early years when the latter was more open to consensus.' (McLaren and Cop 2011)</li> <li>• AKP reproduces a specifically Turkish, populist paradigm of democratization, which emerged in the early years of democratic transition (1950–60) and locates people against the state. Zero-sum notion of politics. Under the AKP: 'limited institution-building and rule-making to accommodate pluralism and weak normative search for positive-sum politics' (Çinar and Sayin 2014)</li> <li>• The 'moderation' of Turkish political Islamism in the particular sense of compromising with the prevailing semi-democratic center: After 2008, AKP failure to enlist the cooperation of pro-secular opposition for multilateral construction of a new and fully democratic center. After 2011: 'with weaker authoritarian and horizontal checks and balances, AKP efforts to unilaterally rebuild and use the semi-democratic center. Elite failure to turn de facto moderations and compromises into formal and explicit agreements and consensus' (Somer 2014a)</li> <li>• Recent drift toward an excessively majoritarian conception of democracy, compromise with state elites, growing self-confidence, and rise as a pre-dominant party. Delegative democracy with personalist leadership and weak horizontal accountability. (Özbudun 2014).</li> <li>• 'A new mode of illiberal democracy', less impressive economic performance, over-ambitious foreign policy. Causes: Decreasing western leverage due to failures of western allies and the increasing appeal of Russia, China, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and non-Western export markets, economic benefits to electorate, conservative values, strong leader. Key notion of religious and secular 'bounded communities' preventing self-criticism/ accountability (Öniş 2015)</li> <li>• Majoritarianism, 'authoritarian practices' and overt 'de-europeization' after 2011. But the EU's (self-serving) 'selective conditionality' combined with the AKP's covert 'counter-conduct', i.e. 'instrumentalization of reforms for consolidation of domestic power' and 'selective application of political reforms' since 2002 (Cebeçi 2016)</li> </ul>
Shift to authoritarianism as the emergence of a new regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'religio-cultural neo-populism' (M. Çinar and Sayin 2014)</li> <li>• 'Even an electoral authoritarianism of a more markedly Islamic character' (Özbudun 2014)</li> <li>• Turkey no longer electoral democracy but competitive authoritarian. The AKP managed to unite the diverse lot of religious groups; created its own media; has different (from advanced democracies) understandings of key democratic concepts (Başkan 2015)</li> <li>• After 2010, the new AKP, rise of authoritarianism and Islamic social engineering by reinforcing &amp; refashioning Turkey's authoritarian <i>laïc</i> institutions (Somer 2015)</li> <li>• A new era exhibiting patterns of delegative democracy (unlike earlier periods scholars identified with it), marked by strong personalized rule and unchecked powers 'legitimized through a crisis-driven narrative', anti-institutionalism, anti-political stance (neo-nationalism) and clientelism (Taş 2015)</li> <li>• Turkey has devolved from a tutelary democracy to competitive authoritarianism. Turkey is part of a broader trend of global authoritarian retreat observed in the weakening of political institutions and the erosion of rule of law by (elected) leaders (Esen and Gumuscu 2016)</li> </ul>
Area of democratization under the AKP	Supremacy of elected governments over the unelected-unaccountable state-elite. (Çinar and Sayin 2014); Pro-EU reformist policies until 2009. (Özbudun 2014); 'End of tutelary democracy' (Esen and Gumuscu 2016)
Description of the AKP	'Conservative party with strong Islamist credentials' (Kalaycıoğlu 2010); 'A party with religious background' (McLaren and Cop 2011); 'Islam-friendly' (Çinar and Sayin 2014); 'Centre-right party where top leadership comes from Islamic roots' (Özbudun 2014); 'Islamist-origin party in secular Turkey' (Taş 2015); 'Islamist' (Başkan 2015)

implications in terms of the changing state–society relationship. Finally, as the third row suggests, democratic developments in the AKP era were also described in terms of transcending the pre-transition, ancient regime.

Second, as the second row of the table shows, some recent contributions developed arguments explicitly referring to the emergence of a new political regime with particular focus on political society and institutions. Scholars who argue about the development of a new regime type such as delegative democracy or competitive authoritarianism discuss a categorical change in the operational logic of the political system. They note that the AKP has accumulated ‘hegemonic’ power to a degree which has not been witnessed since the state-reestablishing (Somer 2016) <sup>9</sup> and revolutionary single-party era of 1923–1950, under the Republican People’s Party (CHP) (Özbudun 2011). Hence, they highlight the erosion of the state-party boundary, the breakdown of the already weak division of powers and independence of the judiciary, cooptation of business elites, direct or indirect control of the media, and, thus, the increasingly ‘uneven playing field’ in multiparty politics in favour of the AKP (Somer 2014b; Başkan 2015; Esen and Gumuscu 2016).

It is yet premature, however, to determine whether a new regime type is fully in place, how stable it is and what the nature of this new regime in the making will be. Either way, it seems that the emergent new authoritarianism involves many important dimensions and mechanisms that extend well beyond the increasingly uneven playing field of the political society. They transform the state–society relationship of old authoritarianism in such ways that – while having some democratizing potential – they produce a new type of authoritarianism.

These new dimensions of authoritarianism in particular appear to apply to three areas I will discuss in three sections below: the political economy of transition, the political economy of welfare and mode of communication in party politics and civil society. There is a growing body of insightful research in all of these areas that need to be linked to research on democratization. Doing this also helps to better understand a seeming paradox of new authoritarianism.

#### 4. The paradox of new authoritarianism

Referring to Russia as an example of new authoritarianism in the world, Ivan Krastev highlights ‘the paradox of Russian authoritarianism today’ that, even though its backers as well as its opponents ‘consider it a flop’, it continues to prevail ‘unmoved’ and enjoy strong popular support. Understanding this paradox, he maintains, can help us understand why authoritarianism survives in the age of democratization (Krastev 2011, 8).

Despite some similarities, Russian and Turkish cases and experiences of authoritarianism are of course very different. Nevertheless, one can talk about a similar paradox in Turkey, which may be critical to analyse new authoritarianism. Thousands of people risked, and indeed hundreds lost their lives when they responded to President Erdogan’s call to take to the streets and defend electoral democracy against the coup attempt of 15 July 2016. All opposition parties in Parliament stood together with the AKP against the coup. All this seems to demonstrate the strength of popular resistance against authoritarian interventions in politics and support for an elected civilian government in Turkey. This being the case, what explains the high levels of popular backing the AKP enjoys despite its own authoritarian policies and interventions?

Many scholars and international observers have amply documented and opposition parties have fiercely criticized the AKP policies that undermined even basic, electoral democracy. Clearly, rather than being a mere victim of coup attempt, the AKP contributed to an environment in which the coup plot could develop, for example by packing state institutions based on politically motivated recruitment policies. This being the case, why does the support for the government continue to be strong and the backing of the opposition continues to be weak? The answers to these questions may lie in the new ways of political welfare, redistribution and communication. These display intriguing similarities to new authoritarianisms in other parts of the world, in addition to having taken *sui generis* and indigenous forms. They help to explain the popular and elite support for authoritarianism.

In the following sections, I have two aims. The first is to put forward theses regarding the main pillars of new authoritarianism with the specific and limited goal of highlighting some dimensions whose connections with new authoritarianism need more attention. The second is to offer a framework that can inform and help to organize further research.

## 5. The main elements of new authoritarianism

### 5.1. *The new political economy of welfare: the emergence of 'conservative and personalized social neoliberalism'*

In terms of its welfare regime, Turkey's old authoritarianism was based on a specific type of symbiotic inequality in the state–society relationship. The state failed to include the majority of society under its poorly developed and poorly managed formal umbrella of social protection and welfare. For example, the unemployed and the informally employed, such as those working in agriculture, had very little or no social protection. Furthermore, there was general dissatisfaction with the quality and availability of social services such as education, public transportation, housing and health. As many scholars noted, however, the poor were not entirely powerless in this model, even though they had inadequate and unequal social rights of citizenship (Eder 2014). The mainly public education system, which featured centrally administered entrance exams for elite schools, provided limited yet important opportunities for merit-based upward social mobility and elite turnover. From the 1960s onwards, a vibrant labour movement was instrumental for acquiring significant labour rights for those working in the formal sector.

Moreover, the undeclared state policy of turning a blind eye to the occupation of public and private land by the poor to build shanty houses functioned as an informal mechanism of wealth redistribution (Buğra and Keyder 2006). This unofficial response – or failure to adequately respond – to the constant influx of millions of rural migrants nevertheless helped to socially and politically absorb massive rural–urban migration. Furthermore, it provided for the migrants opportunities for upward social mobilization. In this context, the squatters had unequal yet significant power vis-à-vis the state. They used the strength of their numbers and their voting rights as leverage to acquire public services and eventually property rights from the state.

This way, cities developed in an unplanned manner and with inadequate infrastructure but millions of rural migrants became propertied and joined the middle classes within a matter of one or two generations. Political patronage and clientelistic links that political parties developed with the poor, which operated in a context of electoral democracy and

of weak and rotating governments, played key roles in this model of redistribution and state–society relationship. In this context, the poor could play political patrons and parties against each other in order to obtain more rights and benefits. Nevertheless, this was still an unequal and inherently authoritarian relationship because people became clients rather than citizens endowed with fully developed and equal rights and responsibilities.

Many recent contributions have observed that this model of welfare has been changing in major ways under AKP governments (Buğra and Keyder 2006; Buğra and Savaşkan 2014; Eder 2014; Dorlach 2015; Öniş 2016). These changes have important implications for new authoritarianism. The new model has significantly improved the quality of the services and has created new property rights for the poor, for example, through massive projects of housing to be discussed below. Hence, when evaluating the changes in terms of the ills of the old welfare regime, it may be assumed that they seem democratizing to many scholars as well as citizens.

If we vet it more carefully, however, the record is more mixed. The new welfare model creates benefits and charity rather than citizenship rights and impersonal policies. It also leads to new and sometimes enhanced forms of social exclusion. Most importantly for our purposes here, the new model supports a state–society relationship in which the benefits are believed to depend on a particular party or ideology, and on particular political personalities, rather than on impersonal state institutions and legal-institutional rights. This fosters authoritarianism by bolstering the status of the ‘providers’ as patrons and that of the beneficiaries as clients. Furthermore, it creates a political context in which clients may have less leverage than before to play one party off against the other. This also limits the ability of the opposition to electorally challenge the governing party.

The new welfare regime began to emerge under various governments during the 1990s and was given impetus by the 2000–2001 financial crises and the subsequent fiscal and financial reforms. But it really developed under AKP governments and has been described as ‘neoliberal populism’ or ‘social neoliberalism’ (Eder 2014; Aytaç and Öniş 2014; Dorlach 2015; Öniş 2016). The main pillars of the new regime include a clamp down on informal and illegal housing, and significant improvements and privatization of the ‘productive welfare state’, i.e. social services in health, education and public transportation (Dorlach 2015). In turn, they weakened the ‘protective welfare state’ by supporting declining rates of unionization, labour rights, unemployment benefits and agricultural subsidies and other benefits in the agricultural sector. ‘Semi-formalization’ increased in the labour sector, which was ‘characterized by the increasing use of subcontracting and outsourcing’ by businesses (Ibid., 2015, 531). For social welfare provision and poverty reduction, where the poor saw important improvements, AKP governments have emphasized means-tested and conditional cash transfer programmes. Furthermore, in social assistance services, they increased significant outsourcing to local government initiatives often involving the AKP organization, and to party- or government-supported private charity foundations (Aytaç 2014; Kaya 2015).

This new welfare regime fosters new authoritarianism in various ways. First, the unequal state–society relationship is reproduced since most of the improvements for the beneficiaries are created in a ‘top-down manner’ by the party elites, rather than in a participatory fashion based on citizen mobilization (Dorlach 2015, 538). Second, the potential for corruption and political clientelism is increased by the focus on benefits and services, as opposed to welfare rights and by the informal channels through which these benefits and services are delivered (Eder 2014). Empirical studies show that the government often employs these

welfare services in a discriminatory fashion in order to reward supporters and to punish opponents (Yoruk 2012; Aytaç 2014). This becomes an important source of inequality in the political playing field in favour of the government.

Even if the government did not deliberately misuse welfare provision for purposes of clientelism, however, it can be put forward that the new welfare regime reinforces new authoritarianism in important ways. It tends to blur the boundaries between state and party and by doing so, tends to make the government indispensable in the eyes of large segments of the population. The AKP outsourced many social responsibilities of the state to the party organization, Islamic charities and individual politicians, in accordance with a conservative–neoliberal economic ideology. This for example contrasts with the case of Brazil and the Partido dos Trabalhadores, which, much like the AKP, came to power with the promise of eradicating poverty. In the Brazilian case, however, the party relied on the state apparatus to implement social policy (Akkoyunlu and Correa 2016). By contrast, the AKP conducted its social policies increasingly through formal and informal channels involving the party organization and foundations associated with the party, political personalities, and, often, the president's own family. When social assistance and services are provided by the party, AKP politicians, and well-connected organizations, rather than by the state, it can be expected that many beneficiaries will associate these benefits with the party. They will think that the continuation of these benefits depends on the maintenance of the AKP rule. This, of course, has a dampening effect on political competition, the possibilities for rotation of power and elite turnover, and, thus, democracy.

Turkey also represents a case where significant outsourcing of social welfare to (Sunni Muslim) 'faith based NGOs' occurred, not necessarily because of state incapacity to provide these services as in the case of, for example, Lebanon, but because of government ideology and choice (Cammatt 2014). Nevertheless, it can be expected to similarly impact the 'constitution and experiences of membership in political community' or in 'mainstream society', especially because these NGOs are supported by the government (Cammatt 2014; Somer 2012).<sup>10</sup> Regardless of the actual level of religious or sectarian discrimination exercised by these organizations, their Sunni Muslim identity enhances the perceived dominance of the majority religious-sectarian identity and the feelings of exclusion by religious and sectarian minorities and secular segments of society. In a nutshell, the new welfare regime brings about important changes in the state–society relationship. Further research may elucidate how this affects the way people perceive state power and legitimacy. It may also investigate to what extent it helps to explain Krastev's paradox, the way people may tolerate or even embrace authoritarian state practices and how authoritarianism survives in an age of democracy.

## ***5.2. The political economy of transition: new authoritarianism as a product of double-transition***

Turkey's hoped-for democratic transition has mainly been examined in terms of political variables such as institutional reforms, civil-military relations, the relationship between Islam and the state, and the 'moderation' or 'normalization' of political Islamism. Comparatively, it has primarily been examined in comparison to the mainly 'political' transitions from military regimes to democracy in southern Europe and Latin America. A closer look, however, may suggest that Turkey's makeover under the AKP resembles in some important ways the double-transitions of the post-communist societies. In the latter, concomitant fundamental

transformations occurred in the political as well as economic society, and in power relations (Linz and Stepan 1996; Kuzio 2001).<sup>11</sup> These societies had to simultaneously cope with massive transfers of political power, as part of their transitions from authoritarian regimes to multiparty politics, and with vast transfers of economic power and ownership as part of their transitions from command to market economies. Massive amounts of state property were privatized whereby some groups became propertied and acquired enormous economic power while others became dispossessed consumers within a matter of years, sometimes virtually overnight. The coordination and social-political costs of managing two transitions at the same time made post-communist transitions all the more challenging.

However, even more helpful for our conceptualization of new authoritarianism in Turkey may be another feature of post-communist transitions. At the same time that these societies were transitioning to political democracy, they were dealt an inherently authoritarian shock. Post-communist transitions rapidly privatized vast amounts of collective state property and oversaw its transfer to private hands. Thereby, not only wealth but also economic decision-making power was rapidly privatized and redistributed. By its very nature and sheer magnitude, such a radical shift of wealth, power and property rights – which meant dispossession for millions of people – can only occur with either a revolution or a top-down intervention in society. The latter is not feasible in a pluralistic and open political society with effective opposition, well-entrenched social rights and active citizenry. Hence, double transitions may increase the likelihood of power being centralized and concentrated in a party or strong leader,<sup>12</sup> and the suppression – or manipulation – of public dissent.

In post-communist transitions, the scale of wealth redistribution in proportion to total wealth was undoubtedly much larger than that in Turkey under the AKP. Even so, the point here is to argue that the difference may be a matter of degree, and similar paradoxes and tensions might have been created in Turkey with respect to democracy, legitimacy and authoritarianism. Seeing and presenting itself as the representative of a rising and conservative group of counter-elite, the AKP has spearheaded the shift of vast amounts of land and capital to supportive business elites (Buğra and Savaşkan 2014). It also dislocated millions of urban dwellers and, whether for good or bad, changed their welfare relationship with the state. To be sure, previous republican-leftist and center-right conservative governments had also nurtured their own economic elites via protectionist policies and favouritism in government tenders and privatization. They thereby fostered corruption and undermined social justice and democracy. However, for at least four reasons, it can be maintained that counter-elite enrichment and transformation of ownership under AKP governments have been creating tensions of a different nature, and of a much larger scale, and have been generating a new kind of democratic deficit and authoritarianism.

First, privatization of public land and productive assets reached unprecedented magnitudes under AKP governments. Privatization has also been a mainstay of their economic policies and successes, especially in the early years. The total value of privatized assets increased from 8.2 billion dollars between 1995 and 2003 to 50.3 billion dollars between 2004 and 2013. This indicated a more than sixfold rise under AKP governments (Eder 2014; Massicard 2014, 14). While some of these privatizations were realized via relatively competitive and transparent tenders, many others were open to corruption and favouritism.

Second, transfers of wealth to counter-elite supporters under the AKP are not limited to new private capital accumulation helped by protectionist policies, privatization and favouritism. Creation and redistribution of wealth and ownership occur through the centralization

of a new kind, and arguably unprecedented level of top-down state power vis-à-vis society with respect to matters of land and property. Through the formation or radical expansion of government agencies, such as the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ), the government greatly augmented its powers to generate and transfer wealth and ownership. Even though TOKİ is formally a regulatory agency, it is involved in construction directly as well as through partner companies. In fact, it has effectively dominated the housing market. Reportedly, TOKİ acquired close to 66 million m<sup>2</sup> of public land (ca. 150 times the size of the Vatican City) free of charge between 2003 and 2008 and produced more than 620,000 housing units and close to 3000 public buildings including schools, mosques and hospitals between 2003 and 2014. Even more importantly for our subject, it ‘contributed to the emergence of a new group of entrepreneurs’ by granting most of its sizeable contracts to favourite companies, over 50% of which were less than 10 years old (Massicard 2014, 11–13).

While the example of TOKİ is important in its own right, it exemplifies a much broader model. The intricate networks that the government has developed with favored companies are not limited to the construction sector. They form a wide web of different sectors including energy, mining, communication and media.<sup>13</sup> Notably, transfers of ownership, and thus of power to make economic decisions, in this model typically involve top-down political decisions. They open up some public property, (or change the status of private property protected for historical, environmental or cultural reasons), for private profit-making. Also frequently, they involve the government’s influencing or taking control of the management of mega companies in such sectors as media or communication using legal loopholes or the threat of tax penalties and other pressures.<sup>14</sup>

Ultimately, all of these transfers of ownership and power result from authoritarian decisions, which are subject to little or no vertical or horizontal accountability. They redistribute power and define and redefine public interest. Genuine democracy cannot coexist with these decision-making practices because they would be hampered by transparency in government and politics, active civil society, and citizen participation, and such democratic checks as free media, independent judiciary and rule of law.

Third, economic growth under the AKP has heavily relied on the construction sector, marked by mega-projects such as the Third Bridge, a giant waterway connecting the Black sea to the Marmara Sea, and a new airport, which is projected to be ‘the world’s biggest’, in Istanbul, as well as mass urban renewal and public housing drives throughout the country. These projects are crucial not only to impress the electorate but also to maintain the party’s counter-elite constituency, since, as already argued, they are undertaken by favored private companies or partner companies of governmental agencies. As a growing literature demonstrates, these policies lead to major transformations of urban landscape, which generate new forms of urban dislocation, poverty and dispossession (Akçalı and Korkut 2015). They also privatize vast chunks of public space. This reduces the ability of the citizenry to interact, congregate, organize spontaneous protests and ensure the vertical accountability of the government.

Fourth, transfers of ownership or management to government-linked private parties diminish the vertical accountability of the government in two more critical ways. Insofar as they take place in key sectors such as communication, energy, transportation and media, they augment the government’s direct and indirect ability to control and manipulate information dissemination. They also increase the government’s abilities to limit public collective actions. Furthermore, businesses abstain from criticizing the government insofar as they

are threatened by takeovers and punishments, such as politically motivated tax penalties. The lure of government favouritism has the same impact. Further research may elaborate how the challenges of double transitions induce new authoritarianism in Turkey and under which conditions authoritarian outcomes can be avoided. Theories of post-communist transitions suggest that the ideology and democratic vision of the ruling political actor becomes a crucial variable determining whether an authoritarian or democratic outcome prevails (McFaul 2002).

### ***5.3. Political communication and party organization: 'smart' censorship, information crowding-out and 'managed' democracy***

On the night of 15 July, President Erdogan called CNN Turk TV using the FaceTime application on his mobile phone. Broadcast live to millions of viewers, this was a crucial moment. He called on people to go into the streets and resist the putschists. He delivered the same message to millions of followers on Facebook. These actions seem to have been instrumental in preventing the coup, and, possibly, in saving his life, according to his own narrative of the events.<sup>15</sup> Yet, Erdogan is not known to be a great friend of social media, and of the media in general, especially when they are free and critical. Starting in his second term, but especially in his third term as prime minister, media freedoms took a deep dive. In 2014, Freedom House finally changed the freedom status of the Turkish press from 'partly free' to 'not free' and noted continuing deterioration 'at an alarming rate' in 2015.<sup>16</sup> According to Reporters without Borders, in 2015 Turkey was ranked 151st out of 180 countries, i.e. lagged behind 84% of the world in terms of press freedoms. Judging by these indexes, Turkey seems to have regressed to the dark conditions of the junta regime in 1980–1983, or, somewhat less grimly, to the conditions of the 1990s, which witnessed major government corruption and violations of media freedoms amid a bloody conflict between the state and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

More important for our purposes here is that the environment in which the media operate and the nature and objectives of the restrictions they face seem to have undergone qualitative changes. These changes create new implications for the nature of political communication and the power relations between the state, the ruling party, and society. Analysing these qualitative changes may help to shed light on various dimensions of the Turkish paradox mentioned above. Why does the ruling party feel the need to restrict media freedoms to such an extent even though it has supposedly managed to build a highly secure bond of trust with its voters based on duly noted factors such as effective party organization, policy successes, political identity and charismatic leadership (Kumbaracıbaşı 2009; Çarkoğlu 2012; Kemahlioğlu 2012)? Which roles do these restrictions play in maintaining the party's electorate as a 'bounded community?' (Öniş 2015). In other words, what is the nature of the bond between the ruling party, the president and their support base in society? What kind of a role do the curbs on the media and on unfettered political information, association and discussion play in the production and reproduction of the myth of the government's relation with its constituencies and the myth of its invincibility?

Part of the answer to these questions may lie in the observation that the main focus of the new authoritarianism is not on suppressing and controlling the media and public opinion per se but on manipulating and instrumentalizing them. This indicates two important

qualitative changes in the relationship between the powers of the state (or government) and society.

First, the instruments that the state employs seem to have changed. In the past, the two main instruments were the judiciary, which enforced legal and sometimes mainly political boundaries of legitimate politics, and the power of the government to economically punish or reward the media – enabled by close economic relations between the state and private companies that also own media companies – which encouraged the media to self-censor (Somer 2010; Coskuntuncel 2016; Yılmaz 2016). Another ‘constraint’ on the media was persecution or at times extrajudicial murders of journalists by ‘Gladio-style’ elements within the security state – dubbed ‘deep state’ (Ünver 2009; Öktem 2011) in Turkey – which especially threatened leftist and pro-Kurdish media.

By comparison, new authoritarianism continues to rely on judicial and economic pressures, but the main instruments of authoritarianism now appear to have become the media themselves. This involves the creation and expansion of privately and publicly owned pro-government media with the active encouragement and often financial assistance of the government (Yılmaz 2016). The ‘corporatist’ nature of the Turkish press and its increasing polarization along party lines, especially before elections seems to be a factor affecting election results and contributing to political polarization (Çarkoğlu, Baruh, and Yıldırım 2014). More important might be the suppressive impact on views and factual information with a potential to undermine public support for the government. The pro-government media become instrumental in debilitating views and criticisms without necessarily censoring the government-critical media entirely. The former crowds out the truth-claims of the latter by employing an offensive strategy of aggressively and repetitively articulating counter truth-claims even on factual matters, in ways reminiscent of “post-truth politics” elsewhere in the world (Davies 2016). Furthermore, critical journalists are accused of spreading lies and attacked on personal grounds by their pro-government counterparts.

Second, the main objectives of authoritarianism seem to have changed. The primary targets of old authoritarianism were the ideologically non-mainstream media covering ideologically ‘sensitive’ issues such as the Kurdish issue and far-leftist and political Islamist causes. Similarly, any ‘critical’ coverage of these issues in the mainstream media was sanctioned with a view to protecting the official ideology, identity and perceived interests of the state. As already argued, this ‘old authoritarianism’ has not been dismantled. But by comparison, the main and dominant object of manipulation and control in the new media environment appears to be the mainstream media, which are disciplined to operate within the government-determined boundaries of acceptable news and criticism. The presence of critical media labelled as ‘non-mainstream’ and vilified as ‘anti-government’ may actually help to consolidate the threat perceptions of the pro-government constituencies. In fact, Erdogan is argued to have made skillful use of the adversarial truths in the critical media in order to give credence to his own versions of truth among his own supporters (Ohm 2015).

Furthermore, and crucially, the primary goal of authoritarian practices seems to have become defending the image, identity and interests of the government and a party rather than those of the state. More specifically, it appears to be the interests of the government presented as those of the state, and, often, the personal interests of particular AKP politicians or President Erdogan himself.

Restrictions on the Internet and social media similarly display elements of old and new authoritarianism. The criticisms of Turkey’s internet freedoms involve ‘first-generation’

controls of 'denying access' to certain websites or content (Deibert et al. 2012; Eldem 2013). But the current restrictions of Turkey's Cyberspace by the government also utilize 'second and third generation' methods, which are tailored to shape and at times emasculate the Cyberspace as much as they are designed to restrict it. Such methods include cyber attacks, espionage, outsourcing of internet controls to private third parties, which can also be called 'delegated censorship' and the projection of ideas deemed favourable by the government through pro-government websites and users. Rather than merely denying access to specific contents, the focus of these interventions is on 'counter-information campaigns' that overwhelm, discredit or demoralize the opposition (Deibert et al. 2012; Coskuntuncel 2016).

In all of these observations, Turkey seems to follow other examples of new authoritarianism in the world where hegemonic rulers do not merely view the media and the Cyberspace as objects of oppression but also as valuable spaces to promote and reproduce the party's domination. Hence, the media and Internet are used to frustrate and weaken the opposition by generating an image of resoluteness and invincibility. They are also used to recruit new people into the elite and to mobilize supporters (Bader 2011; Pshizova 2004). Because of the media's 'winner-take-all' nature, this reliance on the media and 'image-making' may also be contributing to the personalization of politics. It may reinforce one-strong-leader authoritarianism and help to turn charismatic leaders into political celebrities.

Undoubtedly, the Cyberspace also offers opportunities for the opposition to get 'connected' and organized. The colour revolutions and Arab uprisings showed that 'virtual' civil societies can be very effective in enabling spontaneous protests and uprisings. However, in terms of opposing state security forces, and generating sustainable collective actions and durable social movements, they have important disadvantages compared to conventional civil societies. Conventional civic mobilization and political parties are indispensable for opposition actors to politically and electorally challenge authoritarian regimes (Bayat 2013; Beissinger, 2013). Hence, the reliance on online dissent is not necessarily a blessing for the opposition. Presumably, it can serve democratization or authoritarianism depending on how the democratic opposition makes use of the Internet. Insofar as the opposition uses the Cyberspace as a substitute rather than as a complement for conventional civil society and political party activism, the AKP's successes can be explained by the failures of the opposition. Hence, the AKP's image as a mass party with strong membership and support base which is well rooted in society and effective in interest aggregation and representation may be less robust and influential in enabling its electoral support than usually thought.

In terms of conventional measures such as members-voters ratio and party identification and territorialization, Turkey's political parties are relatively well-institutionalized, the AKP being the most institutionalized (Kumbaracıbaşı 2009; Yardimci-Geyikci 2015). Indeed, the AKP has an impressive base of membership with more than nine million members and a members to voters ratio of 40% (as opposed to the main opposition party CHP's ratio of 10%).<sup>17</sup> The party is well-known to depend on an effective grass roots organization with dynamic youth and women's branches. Studies on the AKP's local organizations have focused on their pragmatism and ability to make efficient use of local information and social capital in candidate selection and electoral campaigning (Çınar 2015; Ocaklı 2015).

At the same time, however, a three-year-long ethnographic study of the AKP organization and constituency in a major district of Istanbul suggests that the party's dominant relationship with its constituencies and activists is both unequal and instrumental (Doğan 2016). Far from representing an ideal participatory model, they tend to be viewed as passive clients

and vote-providers, and their views are taken into account mainly as information about people's service needs. Societal input with regard to what the party considers as political or 'ideological' views, and any views that challenge party hierarchy and discipline, or social customs and traditions, are discouraged and tend to be dismissed (Ibid., 2016, 95–102). Similarly, it is noted that the party organization has little power to influence party policies (Ibid., 2016, 91–5). The party organization is at least in principle open to ethnic-regional, social class-based and sectarian diversity as long as potential members share the party's 'conservative' worldview. However, the study shows that those in power and decision-making positions seem to come exclusively from Sunni Muslim and (in the particular district studied) ethnic-Turkish<sup>18</sup> background and relatively well-educated and well-to-do professional classes (Ibid., 2016, 119–41).

## 6. Conclusions

Quo vadis, Turkey? Many have been asking this question especially since the bloody coup attempt of July 2016, and the developments in its aftermath. Has Turkey been 'backsliding' again? Looking back at what seem to be repetitive democratic transitions and reversals since – at least<sup>19</sup> – the mid-twentieth century, it is easy to imagine a country repeating history. This image would not be entirely inaccurate. As I maintained above, a major flaw of Turkey's apparent 'democratic transitions' in the past – against the backdrop of significant socio-economic advancement over time and the survival of formally democratic institutions – appears to have been an inability to transcend, and thus the continuation of what I called old authoritarian regime.

As I have argued in this article, however, what is happening in Turkey also displays many new practices, institutions and ways of legitimation and domination that should be categorized as a new authoritarian regime. Compared to old authoritarianism, the emergent new authoritarian regime has more potential for both repression and democratization in the long run because it is based on more mass support, elite economic interests and heavy manipulation of political information. As research should further elaborate, the latter includes the hasty creation of new and ostensibly 'neo-Ottoman' state symbols and imagery. An important feature tying the developments in these areas together is the fact that AKP governments and constituencies have increasingly perceived themselves as leading a 'revolution.' This has at times been described by party representatives and supporters as 'closing the republican parenthesis in Turkey's history' (Karagül 2015). For party members and supporters, this self-perception as being the pursuers of a righteous end seems to encourage and justify many authoritarian means and measures.

The 'Turkish Revolution', which founded modern Turkey and contributed to the state model underlying the old authoritarian regime, was described as being predominantly elite-led and ideologically driven, and as having relatively weak economic bases in society compared to examples such as Mexico's PRI (Albertus et al. 2016). By comparison, the emergent new authoritarian regime seems to have a more popular economic basis thanks to the new welfare regime discussed in the article. Furthermore, counter-elite economic interests may be a more important determinant of new authoritarianism than ideological motivations. While the rise of a new entrepreneurial class could potentially support democratization, the new elite's dependence on land enclosure and construction, which are sectors heavily dependent on state handouts, and the clientelistic nature of the welfare model

discussed above make it questionable whether they can produce the kind of pro-democratic bourgeoisie and middle classes that theorists of democratization have long conceptualized (Moore 1966).

Similarly, the government's ability to mobilize millions of citizens to oppose the July coup attempt gives rise to several contradictory observations. On the one hand, it testifies to the mass constituency of the new regime. This constituency is now endowed with a newly acquired self-confidence to shape politics as active political agents. This creates a potential for future democratization. On the other hand, the apparent lack of slogans upholding freedom, democracy, and rule of law as opposed to those cherishing religion, nationalism and the authoritarian leader during the so-called 'democracy-guarding rallies' suggest the authoritarian propensities and pro-democratic limits of this potential. Second, as in other examples of new authoritarianism, Turkey's new authoritarianism, and, arguably, its mass constituency, heavily draw on the manipulation of political information and public opinion using new information technologies.

All of these observations were exemplified by a massive 'democracy and martyrs' rally the government organized in August, 2016.<sup>20</sup> The demonstration was presented by some government officials and the pro-government media as having been attended by 'five-million' citizens, even though the square was reported to hold a maximum of one-and-a-half million people (Çevik 2016; Pamuk and Tattersall 2016). More importantly, the event exemplified the impressive organizational and communicational ability of the state, which managed to safely put together a highly spectacular, orderly and well-publicized mass demonstration broadcast live to mass rallies taking place simultaneously throughout the country. But all this presented a sharp contrast with the state's real capacity in terms of providing safety and security in other areas. After all, the coup attempt itself had signalled a long ongoing erosion of state integrity. Furthermore, the country had been shaken by terrorist attacks costing hundreds of lives during the previous year. Moreover, people were being killed in the country's south-east on a daily basis in clashes resulting from the collapsed peace negotiations with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Finally, as discussed above, the government heavily restricted civic freedoms, presumably in order to maintain its image and popularity. As future research will hopefully elaborate, the fact that, by its very nature, new authoritarianism is enabled by the manipulation of information and is constructed by information and communication technologies points to its strengths and possible durability as well as to its weaknesses and potential ephemerality.

## Notes

1. For competitive and electoral authoritarianism as concepts and elsewhere in the world, see among others (Levitsky and Way 2010; Brownlee 2007). For hegemonic parties, among others (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010; Bader 2011). See Taş (2015) for argued transition to delegative democracy.
2. Among others (McFaul 2002; Brownlee 2007; Stepan 2009; Magaloni and Kricheli 2010; Diamond 2015).
3. I use this term in the sense of state elites having the power to simply ignore, signify as irrelevant or, worse, as subversive and thus refuse to consult with large portions of the population based on self-anointed nation state interests and ideological prerogatives.
4. This is not to say that state and society as causal and analytical categories can entirely be separated. Modern states establish their authority crucially by regulating social relations and

- thus embedding themselves in society (Migdal 2001). Turkey's authoritarian state practices are often embedded and reproduced in society and everyday social relations (White 2013).
5. For some recent contributions, see, among others, (Findley 2010; Somer 2016; Yayıcioglu 2016), and, partly, White 2013.
  6. Depending on whether one considers the 'soft-coup' of 1997 as a complete democratic breakdown or a 'correction' within the existing regime (Cizre and Çınar 2003).
  7. Notably, most EU-inspired legal-constitutional reforms were accomplished in the 1999–2005 period based on inter-party consensus in the parliament.
  8. Among others (McLaren and Cop 2011; Öktem 2011; Çınar and Sayın 2014; Somer 2014a).
  9. In many ways, the foundation of the Republic of Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s simultaneously entailed the destruction and discontinuation, as well as the reestablishment and continuity, of the Ottoman state it replaced. Among others, (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997).
  10. Even though the AKP government began to crack down on 'Gülenist' faith-based NGOs after its fallout with the Gülen movement in 2013, a plethora of other Muslim-conservative and Islamist NGOs continue to work with the government.
  11. This analogy could be expanded to capture the idea of a triple transition insofar as Turkey's Kurdish question can be seen as a weakness of 'stateness' – a requirement of successful democratization – since the beginning of the republic.
  12. McFaul 2002.
  13. A voluntary online project called 'Networks of Dispossession' offers informative yet suggestive and unverified data: <http://mulksuzlestirme.org/index.en.html> . Accessed on July 31, 2016. For examples of ownership relations involving the media sector, (Coskuntuncel 2016).
  14. For the example of Turkcell, see 'Three Turkcell executives resign amid rising gov't interference in company', *Hürriyet Daily News*, April 14, 2015. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/three-turkcell-executives-resign-amid-rising-govt-interference-in-company-.aspx?pageID=238&nid=81,029> . Accessed on July 31, 2016.
  15. 'How Erdogan turned to social media to help foil coup in Turkey', *Financial Times*, July 16, 2016. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3ab2a66c-4b59-11e6-88c5-db83e98a590a.html#axzz4GGfAxvo> . Accessed on August 3, 2016. 'Erdogan addresses Turkey via FaceTime amid attempted coup – video', *The Guardian*, July 16, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2016/jul/15/erdogan-facetime-turkey-coup-attempt> . Accessed on August 3, 2016.
  16. Freedom House Press Freedom Country Reports, Turkey, 2014 and 2015. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2014/turkey> and <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/turkey>. Accessed on August 3, 2015.
  17. Based on December 2015 membership and November 2015 general election results. Nationalist Action Party MHP's ratio was 8%. Possibly reflecting legal-political pressures on the pro-Kurdish HDP, the latter's formal membership seems to be exceptionally low. Membership numbers from: <http://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/sayfa/adalet-ve-kalkinma-partisi/1095> ; <http://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/sayfa/cumhuriyet-halk-partisi/1110> ; <http://www.yargitaycb.gov.tr/sayfa/milliyetci-hareket-partisi/1158>. Voters: (<https://sonuc.ysk.gov.tr/module/GirisEkranı.jsf>). Accessed on 4 August 2016.
  18. This ethnic qualification naturally does not apply to majority ethnic Kurdish regions.
  19. Modern Turkey had its first real 'transition' to multiparty democracy in 1950. However, it is possible to trace back its experience with democracy and the evolution of certain *longue durée* political norms and understandings regarding competitive politics to the late Ottoman period. In particular, three events and periods are important, the short-lived episode of constitutional monarchy and parliamentarism in 1876–1878, the restoration of both in 1908 and the period following the events of 1909 until 1920 when the last Ottoman parliament was abolished under occupation.
  20. The rally in Yenikapı, Istanbul, August 7, 2016.

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