

### **Democratisation: what's in a word?**

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In April 2011 I went to Turkey to begin researching the process of democratisation. EU accession talks have stimulated a wave of political reforms. Different actors – Kurdish, Islamic, feminist – use the language of democracy for their own ends. The Turkish press is lively, and taboo subjects are openly discussed. Ozal's 1980 economic reforms transformed society and dispersed economic power to new actors and a growing middle class. On top of other concepts – modernisation, secularisation and westernisation – should we add 'democratisation' to the lexicon of Turkish studies?

*Demokratiklesme* is certainly present in its political discourse. On the surface, the 'wave' of democratisation which has transformed Europe since 1989 is extending itself to Turkey. This is reflected in current concepts like *demokratik özerklik* (democratic autonomy), *sivil toplum* (civil society), *sivil anayasa* (civil constitution) and *insan hakları* (human rights). Yet there is little consensus on what 'democratisation' means besides 'reaching western standards'. My intention is to investigate this question historically. The problem is that since the 19th century, periods of decay have followed those of reform, and the language of new beginnings has been misleading. Moreover, the transition to democracy in 1950 was really carried out in a mechanical way, with democracy meaning essentially elections, and there was no societal discourse of democratisation guiding it.

Turkish democratisation has been 'stop-start' and international bodies still classify it as 'a hybrid regime' (oscillating between autocracy and democracy). Since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) promises a new constitution, and committed Turkey to *ileri* (advanced) *demokrasi* in its April 2011 manifesto, the coming year will test whether the discourse reflects reality. Terms such as 'societal contract' are already being used for the constitution. In Turkey the process of democratisation has always needed an anchor, such as EU accession, and constitution-making provides one. In Europe, conceptual change furthered democratisation best when focused on institutional choices, such as direct versus parliamentary representation. So there are grounds for optimism. On the other hand, the Turkologist Mehmet Fuad Köprülü commented that Turkey needs a mental revolution to break away from the autocratic instincts of the past. Yet 'mental revolutions' succeed in art rather than politics, and reality may not catch up with the conceptual change. Rights, civil society and autonomy are partly illusory everywhere, but a dilemma found in many developing countries is especially acute in Turkey. On the one hand, the direction a society pursues is essential to its identity. On the other, the language ('modernisation', 'westernisation' and now 'democratisation') providing that direction in Turkey anticipates much change, creating discontent with the status quo. The result is a perpetual identity crisis which democracy on its own cannot resolve.

### **Sociology and revolutions in Turkey.**

#### **The transmission of ideas and the birth of liberal thought**

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Understanding the dynamics of modern Turkish political and social thought requires an intellectual excavation, tracing the origins of modern political ideologies in the Turkish context to their mainly western European sources. Such an excavation brings to the surface the fact that the political and social ideas and ideals that have been imported from western Europe since the late 18th century have formed a major component of modern Turkish political thought.

In my postdoctoral research, funded by the British Institute at Ankara, I have sought to explore the impact of Emile Durkheim's sociology on Turkish political thought with a focus on the works of Ahmet Ağaoğlu (1869–1939). While the central aim of the research was to display the role European sociology played in the outbreak of the revolutions and the birth of modern political ideologies in Turkey, my aims also included contributing to the methodological discussions in intellectual history of the transformative function of ideas that are transmitted from one context to another, and uncovering the contribution of Turkish political and social thinkers to the development of sociology as an academic discipline.

Although there has been a number of studies on the Durkheimian influence on the works of the famous nationalist thinker Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) (for example, Spencer 1958; Parla 1985; Mestrovic 1993; Parla, Davison 2004), there has as yet been no study showing that there were deep Durkheimian motifs in Ağaoğlu's liberal thought. The research has paid attention also to the works and activities of earlier Turkish thinkers who utilised European social theories in propounding their ideas, such as Mehmed Sabahaddin (1877–1948) and Ahmet Rıza (1859–1930). I would like to provide here a brief history of the process of the transmission of ideas and the birth of liberal thought in Turkey.

Engendering a new rationalist mode of thinking inspired by Enlightenment ideas in the 1860s and 1870s, the flow of 'liberal' European ideas bought to an end in Ottoman Turkish thought the dominance of the traditions of a theological and geographical-organismic understanding of history and Aristotelian philosophy (Berkes 1936). The advent of modern political ideologies in Turkey, and thus in the Middle East (Findley 1982a; 1982b), was a consequence of the introduction of this 'new mode of thinking'. As of the mid-19th century, the Young Ottomans began to formulate the ideologies of Pan-Islamism and Ottomanism with anti-imperialist but at the same time liberal leanings. These men of the 1860s and 1870s closely read and translated the works of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Charles Montesquieu and Voltaire. The concepts and ideas they introduced into Ottoman thought, such as citizens' rights, freedom of expression, constitutional government and natural rights of the people, not only gave rise to questions connected to the absolute rule of the Ottoman



Ahmet Ağaoğlu

sultan. They also sowed the seeds of liberal political thinking in Turkey. In 1876, Abdülhamid II was brought to the throne on the condition that he introduced the first Ottoman constitution and parliamentary rule. He kept his word, but in the aftermath of the embarrassing defeat in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, on the pretext that the parliament slowed down the war-time decision-making process, he ‘temporarily’ dissolved the parliament, abolished the constitution and sent the leading figures of the Young Ottomans into exile.

The period between the abolition and the re-introduction of constitutional government in the Ottoman empire lasted 30 years. In this period the Young Turk movement appeared as a struggle against the despotic rule of the sultan. Though there was no organic link between the two, the Young Turks, or the men of the 1880s, 1890s and 1900s, were followers of the Young Ottomans in the sense that their ultimate aim was also the creation of a more liberal and just government system for which the Young Ottomans had fought a few decades earlier. The Young Turks differed from their predecessors mainly in that they utilised the sociological teachings of various western European schools in putting forward their ideas. The leading figures of the Young Turk movement sought to understand through the science of society the foundations of Western political and social systems which they took as models in their attempts to create a new Ottoman nation.

In 1902, when the Young Turk movement split into two groups, the leaders of each group were closely studying, and contributing to, the teachings of different French schools of sociology (mainly due to the fact that the majority of Ottoman intellectuals could read only French at the time). Although sociology had been developed in France in order to reorganise society so as to end the social instability and revolutions of the 19th century, the Young Turks would use sociological teachings while preparing for a revolution to reintroduce the constitution.

Turning the social theories of the second generation of Frederick Le Play’s Catholic school of sociology into a political ideology in the Ottoman context, Mehmed Sabahaddin advocated the creation of a new system in the empire that would be based on the ideas of private initiative and decentralisation (Sabahaddin 1999: 22–23). Sabahaddin asserted that the communitarian social structure of Ottoman society should be replaced by the particularistic structure as found in Anglo-Saxon countries. Individuals should be allowed and encouraged to develop their faculties of initiative, perseverance and industry. He wanted local governments and municipalities to be given further rights in his programme, and, taking British public schools such as Bedales as a model, he proposed that a new education system should be established. Sabahaddin’s thought carried deep marks of Victorian liberalism, with his emphasis on the concepts of character and self-government.

Like Sabahaddin, Ahmet Rıza, the leader of the Committee of Progress and Union (Hanioglu 2002: 28), was fascinated by the teachings of a French school of sociology, in this case Saint-Simonianism; he closely followed the works of ‘the liberal Saint-Simonian’ Pierre Laffitte (Jones 2008: 201). Ahmet Rıza likewise suggested the creation of a new individual, despite regarding the state as the engine of progress. However, his emphasis was on the organisation of society rather than on the strengthening of the individual. Both Sabahaddin and Ahmet Rıza contributed to the schools of sociology they followed either financially or through their input into the organisations of these schools. With the works of these two thinkers, the notion of the value of scientific study of society in the restructuring of Ottoman politics and society became popular, and different interpretations of liberalism, from both sides of the Channel, were introduced into the Ottoman empire.

After the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, Gökalp, a Kurdish thinker, attempted to formulate Turkish nationalism by translating Emile Durkheim’s notion of collective conscience as national consciousness. The Durkheimian influence on early Republican political thought has been believed to be owed to his work (Spencer 1958: 640–41). Durkheim became the most widely translated and read western European social scientist in Turkey in the early 20th century (Toprak 2008). But besides Gökalp, there was another channel that made Durkheim’s work influential in Turkey at the time: the works of Ahmet Ağaoğlu.

A liberal professor of law and one of the ideologues of the Kemalist Revolution, Ağaoğlu was one of the members of the committees that penned the first party programme of the Republican People’s Party and that drafted the first constitution of the Republic. To date, Ağaoğlu has been considered to be a liberal individualist for his argument that the individual was the motor of progress and that the foremost duty of the state must be to ensure the security, health and happiness of individuals. But on closer examination, one finds that, like Durkheim, Ağaoğlu’s notion of individualism was the logical completion of his communitarian understanding of society. For both early Durkheim and Ağaoğlu, it was possible, without

contradiction, to be an individualist while asserting that the individual is a product of society, rather than its cause. The individual is a social product because he receives from society even the moral beliefs which deify him. In his view, there was no individual happiness beyond the happiness of society. Yet the individual was sacred, as only through respecting the individual could the moral unity of society be secured (Ağaoğlu 1935a; 1935a; Marske 1987).

Throughout the 20th century, Durkheim's sociology exerted a great influence on the development of the social sciences and politics in Turkey. Thanks to this influence, one of the first chairs of sociology was created at the University of Istanbul in the early 1910s. There were clear marks of Durkheimian theories of division of labour and functional differentiation in the party programme of the vanguard People's Party. The impact of Durkheimian thought would be seen not only in the Kemalist reforms of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Due particularly to the direct influence Ağaoğlu's work exercised on the leadership of the Democrat Party (for instance, Ağaoğlu's son Samet, who was deeply influenced by his father's work, was one of the leading figures of the Democrat Party), the influence of the Durkheimian mode of positivist thinking would stretch in to the 1950s.

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## Site management in Turkey: the case of Antalya

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In 2004 significant changes were made to the 1983 *Law on the Conservation of Cultural and Natural Properties*, the main law dealing with all heritage sites in Turkey. Among these was the inclusion of the novel, to Turkey, concept of site management. The aims and legal grounds associated with site management were put forward in a regulation in December 2005. Specifically, this 2005 regulation seeks to ensure that all heritage sites be managed within the scope of a sustainable plan in co-ordination with the state, NGOs, local communities and authorities. Finding an appropriate balance between the needs for conservation, access, sustainable economic development and the interests of the local communities, and the development of cultural tourism, were set as objectives.

Currently, there are various initiatives introducing site management in different parts of Turkey. One of them is in Antalya, a city located on the Mediterranean coast. Archaeologically, Antalya sits at the junction of the ancient Lycian, Pamphylian and Pisidian cultures. In addition to its archaeological significance, it is also the hub of tourism in Turkey. Site management is essential for Antalya since most of its heritage sites, located along the coast, are affected by dense tourism activities. These sites demand urgent management to control a range of problems caused mainly by high human circulation and concentration of tourist accommodation.

My doctoral research is a case-study focusing on the top-four most visited archaeological sites in the region: Perge, the Alanya Castle, Aspendos and the Church of St Nicholas. These sites have varying characteristics in terms of their tourism pressures and environmental conditions. My research investigates (a) the current state of management at these sites with regard to tourism activities and (b) the practices of the government institutions that are in charge of the management of these four archaeological sites, as well as their relationship with the stakeholders outlined in the 2005 regulation. My investigation is based on personal observations and in-depth interviews with representatives from national and regional governments, NGOs, museums, the private tourism sector and local communities, and also discussions with academics conducting research in Antalya. The data gathered from these interviews and observations are reviewed in the light of the wider literature regarding heritage management and tourism.

Although there is, as yet, no functioning management plan in place at any site, the 2005 regulation, as a guiding document, needs to be discussed, and the current efforts towards site management need to be reviewed. In other words, there is a continuing need for site management to be acknowledged as important by the heritage sector in Turkey. Although heritage management, a little-known concept in Turkey before 2004, has gained significance as a result of the introduction of the management initiatives, the amount of research on heritage management in relation to tourism needs remains very limited.