

Comparative Democratization and Culture Turkey's Jacksonian Moment

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Abstract

This essay compares and contrasts the legacies of two prominent politicians who are important figures in the history of democratization in their respective countries, in order to explore the link between political culture and democratization. These are the seventh American president, Andrew Jackson (in office 1829-1837), and the current Turkish prime minister, Tayyip Erdogan (2003-present). Both Jackson and Erdogan emerged from humble backgrounds, claimed to represent the people and their interests against the established elite, and faced systemic obstacles on their way to political power. Jackson's innovative contributions to modern democracy were the creation of a party press and the spoils system in public appointments. These served his ultimate political purpose, which was to create equal economic opportunities for the American people. In contrast, Erdogan has rooted out almost every vestige of opposition in the mass media and is using the spoils system in the service of his ultimate political purpose, which is to re-Islamize Turkey. Arguably, these differences reflect the cultural obstacles to the formation of liberal democracy in contemporary Islamic societies.

Keywords: Democratization, culture, religion, Islam, Andrew Jackson, Erdogan, Turkey.

This essay explores the relationship between culture and democracy by comparing and contrasting the legacies of two popular politicians who are important figures in the history of democratization in their respective countries. These are the seventh American president, Andrew Jackson (in office 1829-1837), and the current Turkish prime minister, Tayyip Erdogan (2003-present).

Arguably, both leaders presided over comparable breakthrough moments of democratization because their ascent to power symbolized the political

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socialization and empowerment of significant portions of society that were hitherto frowned upon by the status-quo elite: these were the economically underprivileged in the United States and the moderate and radical Islamic opponents of secularism in Turkey.

The comparative political appeal of Jackson's and Erdogan's ideological anti-elitism was buttressed by their humble origins and outsider status in politics, the national elite's scorn of them, the consequent obstacles that they faced in their march to the highest seats of political power, and their populist policies.

Despite the remarkable parallel between what Jackson and Erdogan stand for in the modern global history of democratization, there are also overwhelming differences in their ethno-cultural backgrounds, historical eras, political and institutional settings, aims, and adopted policies. However, some of the most basic obstacles to the present inquiry may be turned to an advantage. First, it is due to the historical difference of their eras that Jackson and Erdogan may be compared as the charismatic chief executives of relatively young democracies with severe shortcomings. Second, it is the very same historical difference that renders the comparison of a president and a prime minister less objectionable: during the past century, we have witnessed the steady "presidentialization" of prime ministers in parliamentary democracies.¹

Nevertheless, there is an unbridgeable gap between what Jackson and Erdogan understood from democratization, and this may be explained by the formative influence of culture. In contradistinction to Jackson whose democratization movement sought to create equal economic opportunities for the American people, Erdogan associates democratization with his quest to re-Islamize Turkey. This is a fateful distinction because the Jacksonian quest for equality of economic opportunities was inherently democratic; the re-Islamization of Turkey is not. Economic inequalities have the potential to destabilize democracies whereas the Islamization of politics is anathema to personal rights and liberties that are characteristic of a liberal democracy.

Thus, although there is a noticeable resemblance between the political legacies of Jackson and Erdogan, the present attempt is essentially one of contrast.² While objecting to an undue sense of pessimism concerning the

¹ Guy B. Peters and Ludger Helms, "Executive Leadership in Comparative Perspective: Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Public Governance," in *Comparative Political Leadership*, ed. Ludger Helms, 25-55 (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 28-29.

² Notwithstanding the rich contrast between Western and Eastern political cultures in relation to freedom and individuality, the present attempt at a critical comparative inquiry concerning the democratic politics and leadership of the developed and the lesser-developed worlds is relatively novel. If anything, the proposed comparison of an American presidential great and an Islamist Turkish prime minister who is openly sympathetic to Hamas is prone to draw fire. On Erdogan and Hamas, see Hillel Fradkin and Lewis Libby, "Erdogan's Grand Vision: Rise and Decline," *World Affairs* 175, no. 6 (2013): 41-50, and Piotr Zalewski, "The Self-Appointed Superpower: Turkey Goes It Alone," *World Policy Journal* 27, no. 4 (2010-2011): 97-102. Previously, Jackson

future democratic prospects of modern Turkey, this essay points at the cultural obstacles to the potential development of liberal democracy in contemporary Islamic societies. After all, the juxtaposition of democracy and the separation of religion and politics is not simply a Western prejudice but the *sine qua non* for obtaining the benefits of modern liberalism that are associated with human progress. Among these are the sovereignty of the people as opposed to that of theological entities; freedom of conscience, expression, and experience; equality before the law; the right to life and private property free from arbitrary interference or seizure; and scientific and material advancement. Nor is it sensible to trivialize the distinction between Jackson's quest for equal economic opportunities for the people and Erdogan's zeal to re-Islamize Turkey, the latter purportedly being a reaction to economic inequalities. For contemporary Islamic revivalists, Islamization of politics and society is an end in itself; it is the ultimate goal.³

Culture and Democracy

In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville argued that good laws served to maintain a democratic republic in America, and good mores served to sustain good laws.⁴ A society's mores, a notion that includes political culture, were decisively influenced by its religion. Mexico, which had adopted American-style laws, was not able to sustain democracy due to its defective mores.⁵ Along similar lines, writing in the aftermath of the post-colonial wave of

has been compared to other American presidents and, on one occasion, to a presidential hopeful. Richard Hofstadter anecdotally compares and contrasts Jackson's economic populism to that of Thomas Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and William J. Bryan, and his nationalism to that of Abraham Lincoln. See Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), 51, 54, 61, 190, 101. Lynn Hudson Parsons compares Jackson's nationalism to that of John Quincy Adams, his bitter rival and predecessor. See Lynn Hudson Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics: Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, and the Election of 1828* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Presidents Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt themselves compared their respective nationalism and struggle against vested economic interests to that of Jackson. See Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 334, and Jon Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* (New York: Random House, 2009), 31, 354-355. Similarly, Erdogan has recently been compared to another prime minister from the lesser-developed world by Ayşe Zarakol, who contends that there are similarities between contemporary Turkish and Thai politics, and that Erdogan's democratic populism is akin to that of the former Thai prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, and his younger sister, former Thai prime minister, Yingluck Shinawatra. See Ayşe Zarakol, "Revisiting Second Image Reversed: Lessons from Turkey and Thailand," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (2013): 150-162.

³ Bernard Lewis, *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), and Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples* (New York: Vintage International, 1998).

⁴ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 292.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

independence following World War II, the proponents of modernization theory in the United States encouraged new sovereign states to adopt Western ideas and institutions, rather than blame former colonial powers, in order to escape underdevelopment.⁶ However, the advent of democracy or democratization outside the West is a relatively new phenomenon. The ongoing third wave of democratization, which began in 1974, has had the greatest impact on the third world, but its future is clouded by a high degree of uncertainty. Given the historical record, Harrison holds that some cultures are more suitable for social, political, and economic progress than others;⁷ Moore and Fukuyama draw our attention to culture as the principal contributor to successful democratization;⁸ and Lewis specifically remarks on the dismal beginnings of democracy in contemporary Islamic societies after World War II, compared to democracy in Judaic and Hindu societies.⁹

Tocqueville argued that democracies were superior to aristocracies in that they stood for the best interests of the many.¹⁰ At the same time, he paired the rule of calculated reason with aristocracies, and the rule of disruptive and boisterous passions with democracies. According to the aristocratic French liberal, democracies could attain truth only by experience, or trial and error. Fortunately, Americans were relatively more enlightened than other aspiring democracies and made repairable mistakes, which allowed them to escape total demise.

Tocqueville's comments may be the key to the essence of Jacksonianism. Jackson has been a divisive figure in American history precisely because he represented the best and worst penchants of democratic politics. As a self-made man from rags to riches, from materially deprived obscurity to a military hero of national renown, he was the symbol for an age when Americans aspired to unfettered social and economic mobility. His greatest political legacy in the American history of democratization was his campaign against economic monopolies and privilege that were poised against equal economic opportunities for average American people. For his detractors, however, Jackson and his movement epitomized democratic ignorance and vulgarity *par excellence*. His agrarian rhetoric, vehement distrust of banking, finance, and paper money, and his indomitable faith in species currency (metal money) were reminiscent of

⁶ Howard Handelman, *The Challenge of Third World Development*, 6th ed. (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2011), 15-17.

⁷ Lawrence E. Harrison, "Promoting Progressive Cultural Change," in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, ed. Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 296.

⁸ Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1966), and Francis Fukuyama, "The Primacy of Culture," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (1995): 7-14.

⁹ Lewis, *The Shaping of the Modern Middle East*, 54.

¹⁰ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 216.

medieval European economic doctrines,¹¹ at a time when America was laying the preliminary groundwork of its global commercial, industrial, and political dominance. Jackson's single most democratic policy accomplishment was the dismantlement of the Second Bank of the United States. The national bank was the largest economic monopoly at the time and, therefore, the foremost symbol of the economic privileges of the so-called moneyed aristocracy. In the short-term, however, the dismantlement of the Second Bank was a tragic victory for the people because it culminated in the panic of 1837, or the greatest economic crisis that America had experienced until that time.

Tocqueville's implicit warning about democracies in less advanced societies and the potential for irreparable popular mistakes takes us to the case of contemporary Turkey and Erdogan. The re-Islamization of contemporary Turkish politics, society, and culture caters to the religious passions of Erdogan and his devout electorate, but overturning Atatürk's progressive legacy neither serves modern Turkey's enduring aspirations nor the cause of democracy. Erdogan's increasingly repressive style of governance, or creeping authoritarianism, is a simple and clear indication that re-Islamization of politics and liberal democracy are incompatible.

The Limits of Culturalist Explanations

The fateful connection between democratization and economic justice in America, and between democratization and the end to separation of church and state in Turkey, can be explained by the role of political culture. Nevertheless, the alleged unsuitability of Islamic political culture to democracy, or the historically proven suitability of American political culture to the same, does not justify black and white generalizations. Both the fortunes of Jacksonian democracy in American history and of Erdogan's Islamic democracy in contemporary Turkey suggest that even groundbreaking episodes of democratization do not necessarily lead to freedom or a stable liberal democracy, at least in the short-to medium-term.

Although Jackson was an immensely popular democratic politician in his time, his divisive influence and the consequent climate of intense partisanship contributed to the advent of the American Civil War (1860-1865) by weakening the chances for national political dialogue. In the *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Moore remarks that, had the political and economic alliance between the agricultural South and the West, on whose political support Jacksonianism rested, not come to an end with the outbreak of the Civil War, and the Northern industrialists and the Western yeomanry not formed another alliance at the expense of the South, the future trajectory

¹¹ Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *The Rise and Decline of Jacksonian Democracy* (New York: Robert E. Krieger Publishing, 1970), 60.

of American democracy would have been quite different. “Then the United States would have been in the position of some modernizing countries today, with a latifundia economy, a dominant antidemocratic aristocracy, and a weak and dependent commercial and industrial class, unable and unwilling to push toward political democracy.”¹²

In parallel, the recent civil upheaval in Turkey against Erdogan’s controversial re-Islamization policies and authoritarianism may be the harbinger of a seismic conflict, one that is perhaps necessary to overcome the present crisis of Ataturk’s socially progressive secular republic. This said, civil conflict over freedom of conscience and the relationship between religion and politics is neither an unfamiliar phenomenon in the geography that modern Turkey occupies, nor is it strictly related to the politically expansive nature of Islam. In the eighth and ninth centuries A. D., the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire in Asia Minor, which was Christian, was torn by the internecine Iconoclastic controversy.

Essay Plan

The following comparative inquiry about the role of culture in explaining the divergent natures of democratization in the United States and Turkey is composed of two separate sections on Jackson and Erdogan that are organized in parallel parts. The first part highlights the humble personal origins of Jackson and Erdogan, who are emblematic figures of the democratic movements that they spearheaded. A comparative review of their early lives reflects the disparate role of freedom and authority in different cultural settings. The second part discusses the outsider status of these democratic leaders and the systemic obstacles that they encountered before they reached the pinnacle of political power in their countries. Part three examines the sources of Jackson’s and Erdogan’s political appeal, or the ideological foundations of their anti-elitism, with particular attention to the importance of religion and economics in different cultural settings. Part four discusses these leaders’ most notable policies in the service of democratization and the ultimate ends of democratization in different cultural settings. Parts five and six address Jackson’s and Erdogan’s efforts to create a party press and their use of the spoils system in public appointments to attain their contrasting political objectives.

The Legacy of Andrew Jackson

Jackson and His Democracy

The quarter century following the inauguration of the seventh American president, Andrew Jackson, on March 4, 1829, is referred to as the Age of

¹² Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 153.

Jackson in political history. Jacksonian democracy is characterized by the politics of defending the interests of the people, including agrarian and frontier interests in the South and the West against an allegedly privileged commercial and financial establishment in the East.¹³ However, an excessive focus on Jackson's agrarian rhetoric, or a blind trust in Schlesinger's argument that the Jacksonian democrats were the champions of working-class interests,¹⁴ overshadows a fundamental truth. By leading a crusade against established monopolies and privilege, Jackson and his Democratic Party deregulated the economy and expanded opportunities for small but expectant capitalists. Thus, by reversing the fortunes of Chestnut Street, or the headquarters of the national bank in Pennsylvania, Jackson spurred the spectacular rise of Wall Street. Therefore, Hofstadter writes that Jacksonian democracy was "a phase in the expansion of liberated capitalism,"¹⁵ and Meyers that "it cleared the path for the triumph of laissez-faire capitalism..."¹⁶ For Bray Hammond, Jacksonian deregulation was a prelude to the age of the robber barons.¹⁷

With his second election in 1832, Jackson had become the first American president to be elected by universal manhood suffrage without property qualifications, or by popular vote.¹⁸ This is the other basic reason why the Jacksonian era is considered to be a milestone in the history of American democratization. For all the fanfare over it, however, Jacksonian democracy does not measure up to contemporary liberal democratic standards. In that era, indigenous North Americans were driven to a tragic end by government policies, there was large-scale plantation slavery for Africans (Jackson was even against the distribution of abolitionist literature by federal mail),¹⁹ women were politically disenfranchised,²⁰ and according to the period commentator Tocqueville, democratic pressures for conformity weighed heavily against free expression and individuality.²¹ As a token of its limitations, Jacksonian democracy met its ultimate demise with the American Civil War.

¹³ M. Sidney Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776-2011*, 6th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 2012), 126.

¹⁴ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946), 522. The extent of Northern industrial labor's support for Jackson and his democracy is at best dubious. See James L. Bugg, Jr. and Peter C. Stewart, eds., *Jacksonian Democracy*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), and William A. Sullivan, "Did Labor Support Jackson," *Political Science Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (1947): 569-580.

¹⁵ Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 55.

¹⁶ Marvin Meyers, "The Jacksonian Persuasion," *American Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1953): 15.

¹⁷ Quoted in Lee Benson, "Jacksonian Democracy: Concept or Fiction?" in *Jacksonian Democracy*, 2nd ed., ed. James L. Bugg, Jr. and Peter C. Stewart (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 72.

¹⁸ Milkis and Nelson, *The American Presidency*, 129.

¹⁹ Meacham, *American Lion*, 305.

²⁰ Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 129-130, 124.

²¹ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 235-249, 661-676.

Jackson's Personal Background

A quintessential democratic leader, Andrew Jackson was the first American president to have sprung from the ranks of the common people. He had become a wealthy plantation and slave owner late in life, yet during the American Revolution he had to walk forty shoeless miles.²² His father had died before his birth and, thereafter, his mother had to work as a housekeeper for the extended family until her death in 1781, when Jackson was only fourteen.²³

During his early adulthood, Jackson was a proud but dissolute figure. An acquaintance recalled: "Andrew Jackson was the most roaring, rollicking, game-cocking, horse-racing, card-playing, mischievous fellow that ever lived in Salisbury [North Carolina]."²⁴ In 1806, he emerged victorious from a lethal duel with another lawyer that was provoked by a cancelled horse race, the forfeit of money involved, and possibly an insult to his wife.²⁵ At that time in the American South, where a strict code of honor applied, duels were not rare. According to one estimate, 90 percent of the duels took place between lawyers, who were professionally dissatisfied and seeking to advance their careers through social repositioning.²⁶ Nevertheless, the dueling incident makes Jackson the only American president to have deliberately killed someone in civilian capacity, although Vice President Aaron Burr had killed the Federalist mastermind Alexander Hamilton in a duel in 1804.²⁷ (Jackson was also the first American president to have experienced an assassination attempt, presumably by a madman.)²⁸

According to Meacham and Parsons, for two years, Jackson lived with his future wife in full knowledge that she was married to someone else,²⁹ although more sympathetic historians explain this as a legal misunderstanding.³⁰ Rachel Donelson's first husband had accused her of adultery in his divorce petition to the court,³¹ and as a religious woman she interpreted her barren marriage to Jackson as a godly punishment for her sexual sins.³² The issue was never fully buried. Jackson himself attributed her death before his presidential inauguration to the emotional strain caused by his opponents' abuse of this matter during the

²² Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Andrew Jackson's Honor," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 1 (1997): 27.

²³ Meacham, *American Lion*, 9.

²⁴ Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

²⁶ Wyatt-Brown, "Andrew Jackson's Honor," 20.

²⁷ Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 2, 20.

²⁸ See Richard C. Rohrs, "Partisan Politics and the Attempted Assassination of Andrew Jackson," *Journal of the Early Republic* 1, no. 2 (1981): 149-163.

²⁹ Meacham, *American Lion*, 22, and Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 9, 143.

³⁰ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 6.

³¹ Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 9.

³² Meacham, *American Lion*, 189, and Wyatt-Brown, "Andrew Jackson's Honor," 32.

electoral campaign.

Jackson lacked a formal education. His deficient grammar and spelling skills have been the subject of humorous journalistic and scholarly debate in the past,³³ but Hofstadter claims that such shortcomings were standard in the American South and Southwest in that era, and that even George Washington, a Virginian aristocrat and the first president of the United States, could not spell any better.³⁴ Nevertheless, allegedly inspired by Jackson's iconic popularity, future American presidential candidates hid their intelligence from the public.³⁵

Jackson reputedly possessed leadership qualities, including a strong will and determination, military courage, and public-spiritedness. Before becoming president of the United States, he had served as a lawyer, a public prosecutor and attorney general for Tennessee, a delegate to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention, a United States congressman and senator from Tennessee (which was then a border state), a judge of the Tennessee Superior Court, and a major general of the Tennessee militia and the United States Army.

Jackson's terms in the United States House of Representatives and the Senate were brief, always less than a year. When Jackson was a federal senator from 1797 to 1798, Thomas Jefferson presided over the Senate as the nation's vice president. In 1824, he allegedly remarked that Jackson was temperamentally unfit for the senatorial post, could not speak due to the rashness of his feelings, and "often choked with rage."³⁶

Jackson's spectacular victory in the Battle of New Orleans (1815) against the British brought him into the national spotlight. Yet, both before and after the war, he was involved in appalling frontier violence against Native Americans. In one instance, the Tennessee militia under his command killed around two hundred Creek Indians, including women and children.³⁷ The American Indians referred to him as "the sharp knife" and "the pointed arrow,"³⁸ and the notorious Trail of Tears would be caused by the forced Indian removal policies of Jackson's future presidency.

Jackson: A Political Outsider

Despite a successful military career that raised Jackson to the status of a national hero and substantial experience in local and state politics, the American political elite considered him an unsuitable candidate for the presidency due

³³ Allen Walker Read, "Could Andrew Jackson Spell?" *American Speech* 38, no. 3 (1963): 188-195.

³⁴ Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 44.

³⁵ Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, xvii.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁷ Stephen Bertman, "Andrew Jackson: Savage Sophisticate," *American History* 39, no. 2 (2004): 44.

³⁸ Meacham, *American Lion*, 26.

to his lack of formal education, defiant and explosive temperament, rough frontier background, and populist economic ideology. Until the end, he was a military chieftain and an undeferential demagogue with despotic ambitions,³⁹ whose actions seldom rose above suspicion.⁴⁰

The dramatic outcome of the 1824 presidential election had a crucial role in solidifying Jackson's image as an outsider. Although Jackson had topped his rivals in the popular vote, the results were inconclusive, and the House of Representatives had to decide the outcome. The leader of the House, Henry Clay of Kentucky, himself originally a candidate, considered Jackson to be unfit for the presidency and threw his support behind the candidacy of John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts. Once the president, Adams appointed Clay, with whose crucial support he had won the election, as the secretary of state. Jackson and his partisans referred to this episode as "the corrupt bargain," and exploited it throughout the ineffective presidency of Adams that ended in 1829.

Contemporary historians have no satisfactory evidence of a corrupt bargain between Adams and Clay.⁴¹ Until that time, the American secretary of state was the natural favorite to succeed to the presidency, and Clay had perennial presidential ambitions, but this appointment proved to be a momentous *faux pas* on his and Adam's part.

In addition to their political rivalry, Clay objected to Jackson's presidency because of substantial differences on national economic policy and republican worries over Jackson's temperament. Four years before his critical support for Adams, Clay had referred to Jackson's capture of Florida from the Spanish in 1818 and his execution of two British subjects on that occasion, apparently in defiance of President James Monroe's orders, as "a triumph of the military over the civil authority" and as "a triumph over the constitution of the land."⁴² Jackson's predecessor, President Adams, had similar civic concerns in mind when he described Jackson as "a truly wild man—blustery, threatening, and senselessly violent, both in emotions and actions,"⁴³ but this was partially politicking since Adams had defended Jackson's nationalistic exploits in the past, when he was the secretary of state for the Monroe administration.⁴⁴ A

³⁹ Alfred A. Cave, "Abuse of Power: Andrew Jackson and the Indian Removal Act of 1830," *Historian* 65, no. 6 (2003): 1348, and Matthew S. Brogdon, "Defending the Union: Andrew Jackson's Nullification Proclamation and American Federalism," *Review of Politics* 73, no. 2 (2011): 272.

⁴⁰ Cruce Stark, "The Historical Irrelevance of Heroes: Henry Adams's Andrew Jackson," *American Literature* 46, no. 2 (1974): 172.

⁴¹ Meacham, *American Lion*, 45; Milkis and Nelson, *The American Presidency*, 121; and George Brown Tindall, *America: A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 403.

⁴² Meacham, *American Lion*, 35-36.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁴⁴ Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 53-56.

prominent American intellectual in that era, Ralph Waldo Emerson, entered his feelings about Jackson and his followers in his journal under the heading of “ANIMALS” (caps in the original).⁴⁵ Undoubtedly, these consternated, worrisome, and pejorative statements can be related to the political logic of the American Founding Fathers, who had devised the Electoral College in order to refine the will of the people. And, such elitist statements resonate with the political opponents of Erdogan in Turkey, who are now experiencing the pangs of democratization.

Jackson’s Religio-Political Appeal

Jackson’s political appeal was mainly based on economic interest, social class,⁴⁶ and heroic reputation. His humble beginnings endeared him to the ordinary people, who at that time were yearning for “equality of economic opportunities.” His open distrust of the commercial and financial establishment in the East, genuine identification with the yeomanry, and defense of its values attracted the support of agrarian and frontier interests in the South and the West, and the support of small but aspiring capitalists.

Jackson’s remarkable restraint against the political use of religion stands in sharp contrast to the Middle Eastern political tradition. He was careful not to seek popularity through the use of religion and did not join a church until his retirement from the presidency.⁴⁷ In his heyday, he was widely considered to be indifferent to religion,⁴⁸ or even irreligious.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, according to Ward, a divine purpose was part of his aura: some of the American public related Jackson’s spectacular victory in the Battle of New Orleans against all odds to divine intervention, and Jackson himself commented on his role in the war as “the humble instrument of a superintending Providence.”⁵⁰ In parallel, according to Martin Van Buren (a Jackson ally, protégé, and the eighth president of the United States), Jackson was convinced that “to labor for the good of the masses was a special mission assigned to him by the Creator.”⁵¹

Although random religious terminology colored Jackson’s rhetoric throughout his political career, he regarded the clergy as a special interest group

⁴⁵ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 249.

⁴⁶ Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 115-116, 127-130.

⁴⁷ John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 202.

⁴⁸ Wyatt-Brown, “Andrew Jackson’s Honor,” 32.

⁴⁹ Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson*, 350-352, and Meacham, *American Lion*, 56.

⁵⁰ Ward, *Andrew Jackson*, 107 (originally quoted from the *National Intelligencer*, January 10, 1824). The public’s belief in God’s favor to Jackson and the American army in the Battle of New Orleans helped to foster the development of the Manifest Destiny doctrine, which justified American expansionism in the nineteenth century with reference to a divine mandate to expand the realm of freedom and democracy. See Ward, *Andrew Jackson*, 136.

⁵¹ Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson*, 43, and Marvin Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 148.

and was fully committed to the separation of church and state.⁵² For example, Jackson and his followers raised principled opposition to an evangelical call to end federal mail delivery on the Sabbath day.⁵³ In addition, during a cholera epidemic in 1832, Jackson opposed a politically convenient initiative by Henry Clay, who was his principal rival in that year's presidential election, to have the federal government declare a national day of prayer.⁵⁴

Jackson's personal correspondence reveals that his reluctance to join a church community and thereby make a public confession of his faith was motivated by a desire to avoid taking advantage of religion for political ends.⁵⁵ After his retirement, arguably influenced by his late wife's legacy, he became a member of the Presbyterian Church.⁵⁶

Jackson's Democratic Policies

With regard to the debate on democratization in early American history, there is broad scholarly agreement that Jackson's "killing" of the Second Bank of the United States was his most important policy accomplishment. For average people, the bank was a national symbol of the congressionally chartered monopolies in finance and transportation (such as bridges, ferries, and turnpikes) that were responsible for rising living costs. These monopolies were chartered by the federal or state governments, through procedures that were open to favoritism and corruption.⁵⁷

Jackson killed the bank by vetoing the congressional bill for rechartering it in 1832 and by removing federal deposits from it in 1833. The whole affair took place in an extremely polarizing way. Jackson presented the national bank controversy as a conflict between the moneyed aristocracy and the humble yeomanry, the rich against the poor, or the elite against the people.⁵⁸ The Second Bank of the United States, chartered in 1816, was a quasi-private bank that functioned as the central bank of the United States by serving as the depository for federal funds, by ensuring sound credit practices throughout the nation due to its leverage over other banks that had smaller amounts of capital (in other words, by regulating the national money supply as the nation's main creditor), and by providing a stable currency, although it did not have a monopoly on issuing banknotes.⁵⁹ The federal government provided one-fifth of the bank's

⁵² Meacham, *American Lion*, 56.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵⁶ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 123-125.

⁵⁷ Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 57.

⁵⁸ Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*, 166, 198-199, 205-206.

⁵⁹ Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War: A Study in the Growth of Presidential Power* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), 35-36. According to Hofstadter, the bank supplied approximately a quarter of the banknotes in circulation. See Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 57.

capital and appointed five of its twenty-five board members. Therefore, Remini remarks, “the fiscal policy of the nation would be controlled, to a degree, by private citizens, most of them wealthy and northern.”⁶⁰ This was an additional source of resentment for men of small and fixed income, including farmers, laborers, mechanics, shopkeepers, and many Southern planters, who were occasional victims of financial speculation and, consequently, distrusted paper money.⁶¹

Contemporary students of the American presidency are divided over the merits of Jackson’s crusade against what he called the monster bank. Meyers and Remini point out Jackson’s unreasonably vehement objection to the bank, despite its manifest benefits to the nation, whereas Schlesinger lauds the Jacksonian Democrats for their concern with the economic basis of democracy.⁶² Yet, the immediate economic consequences of the bank war were a mild recession in 1833-1834, caused by bank president Nicholas Biddle’s scare tactics to save the bank, and the panic of 1837, just a few months after Jackson left office. During the panic, 40 percent of America’s 850 banks collapsed.⁶³ The American economy did not recover from the panic of 1837 and the resulting economic depression until the mid-1840s.⁶⁴ The crisis was caused primarily by an economic depression in England, which led to a credit crunch in America. The American economy was particularly hard-hit because it had entered an era of uncontrolled speculation due to Jackson’s dismantlement of the national bank. Meyers remarks that Jackson’s populist economic policies were an absolute failure and eventually abandoned, but both Remini and Schlesinger trace the origins of the modern presidency, or the tribune of the people serving as a counterweight to the business community, back to Jackson.⁶⁵

Rozwenc considers Jacksonianism to be an “interesting marriage between democracy and capitalism... .”⁶⁶ The Jacksonian crusade against economic monopolies and privileges was neither limited to the bank war nor ended with Old Hickory’s retirement. The judicial counterpart of the bank war was the American Supreme Court’s Charles River Bridge decision in 1837. The Charles River Bridge was a toll-collecting monopoly, which connected Boston to Cambridge. Its proprietors challenged the Massachusetts legislature’s

⁶⁰ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*, 24.

⁶¹ Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson*, 120.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 143, 505; Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*, 10-11; and Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*, 43.

⁶³ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 311.

⁶⁴ Tindall, *America*, 435.

⁶⁵ Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*, 254; Remini, *Andrew Jackson*, 148; and Schlesinger, *The Age of Jackson*, 505-523.

⁶⁶ Edwin C. Rozwenc, ed., *Ideology and Power in the Age of Jackson* (New York: New York University Press, 1964), xx.

charter for Warren Bridge, a toll-free potential rival. The Court upheld Warren Bridge's charter to foster fresh entrepreneurship that served the public good. This was a historic decision which spurred the rise of American competitive corporate capitalism. The five consenting justices were all Jackson appointees, and the two dissenting justices were from the past. Chief Justice Roger Taney was Jackson's collaborative secretary of the treasury in 1833, at the height of the bank war.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, Jacksonian democracy was not strictly against economic regulation. By an executive order, Jackson's successor, President Van Buren, established the ten-hour work day for federal employees.⁶⁸

Jackson and the Party Press

A distinct feature of democratization during Jackson's presidency concerns his relations with the press. As Tocqueville observed, partisanship in the press was a prevalent phenomenon in those days,⁶⁹ but Jackson was the first American president to establish an unofficial administration newspaper to mold public opinion. With the rise of the national bank controversy, Jackson grew disappointed with pro-Democratic Party newspapers, including the *United States Telegraph*. As a result, starting in 1830 under the loyal editorship of Francis Preston Blair, the *Washington Globe* sought to explain and promote the administration's political initiatives to the American public.⁷⁰ In turn, the White House granted occasional favors to the *Washington Globe*, such as commissioning it to print diplomatic correspondence in 1832.⁷¹

According to Parsons, Jackson appointed at least seventy partisan newspaper editors to federal offices and "others received lucrative printing contracts."⁷² Jackson's attempt to form a closer relationship with the public through the press was extraordinary because, until the dawn of the twentieth century, American presidents refrained from making direct spoken appeals to the public for fear of being perceived as demagogues, or potential tyrants.

The Spoils System under Jackson

An equally notable feature of democratization during Jackson's presidency concerns federal appointments. Jackson was the first American president to have implemented the spoils system in federal bureaucratic appointment.⁷³ Presidents before him regarded administrative positions as bipartisan, and there had not been a sizable administrative overhaul since the Jefferson

⁶⁷ Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 63-65, and Deussen, *The Rise and Decline of Jacksonian Democracy*, 57.

⁶⁸ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 312.

⁶⁹ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 172-180.

⁷⁰ Meacham, *American Lion*, 165, and Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*, 68.

⁷¹ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*, 98.

⁷² Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 136.

⁷³ Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*, 187, and Meacham, *American Lion*, 82.

presidency.⁷⁴ Jackson's immediate predecessor, John Quincy Adams, had fired a total of twelve federal officers solely due to misconduct and fraud, and had twice appointed a disgruntled army surgeon, who threatened to kill him, to federal posts.⁷⁵ This was an unwieldy approach to public administration in the emerging era of popular democracy and mass political parties. In contrast, Jackson rewarded partisan loyalty and argued that in a true democracy no one was entitled to a permanent hold on government posts at the expense of opportunities for other citizens. Even if Jackson's partisan appointments were an improvement to administrative efficiency as Somit claims,⁷⁶ they occasionally came at an additional cost to the public. Most notably, Jackson's appointment as the customs collector for the Port of New York, Samuel Swartout, fled to Europe with \$1.22 million which he had pocketed over eight years.⁷⁷ However, that was a time before the advent of the general welfare state, and the size and scale of the American government was incomparably smaller than that of its modern counterpart. All in all, according to Meacham, Jackson overhauled approximately 10 percent of the federal administration, or replaced a total of 919 persons.⁷⁸

The Legacy of Tayyip Erdogan

Erdogan and His Democracy

The Jacksonian era was a turning point in the history of American democratization. This was principally due to the humble personal background and populist economic policies of its emblematic leader, Andrew Jackson. A parallel argument can be made for current Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and his populist democracy. Although universal adult suffrage in relatively free and fair elections have intermittently been practiced in Turkey since 1950, Erdogan and his Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) have sought to project themselves as the foremost defenders of the people against the secular establishment, which is against expressions of Islamic religiosity in public life. In the same vein, upon the AKP's initial rise to power, the Spanish sociologist of religion, Casanova, claimed that "the new [AKP] government was certainly the most representative democratic government in all of Turkey's modern history."⁷⁹ Thus, for the unconvinced critics of Turkish secular republicanism, the advent of Erdogan and his fellow Islamists was a

⁷⁴ Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, 49.

⁷⁵ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 44-46.

⁷⁶ Albert Somit, "Andrew Jackson as Administrator," *Public Administration Review* 8, no. 3 (1948): 188.

⁷⁷ Reynolds, *Waking Giant*, 85.

⁷⁸ Meacham, *American Lion*, 82.

⁷⁹ Jose Casanova, "Could a Democratic Muslim Turkey Ever Join the European Christian Club or Which Is the Torn Country?" *IWM Newsletter* 84, no. 2 (2004): 30.

long-awaited democratic epiphany. It symbolized not only what Turkey is, but more importantly, what Turkey ought to be.

Notwithstanding his challenge to secular republicanism, Erdogan was initially hailed for enlarging the support base of democracy in his country. Whether out of tactical pragmatism or conviction, through his argument that Islamic religiosity and democracy are not mutually exclusive, or through his blend of a democratic rhetoric with a strong dose of religious conservatism, he transformed a relatively peripheral opposition to Turkey's secular political order into a dominant political movement. In his first term, he reputedly made genuine contributions to liberalization,⁸⁰ but with consecutive landslide electoral victories in the 2007 and 2011 general parliamentary elections and Turkey's waning European Union (EU) membership prospects, he began to show increasingly authoritarian tendencies.

In truth, since they came to power in 2002, Erdogan and his allies have systematically tamed the unelected and unruly obstacles to a populist Islamic democracy in Turkey, including the army, bureaucracy, courts, big business, free press, and civil society. After a decade of AKP governments, the only remaining trace of a division of powers in Turkey is between Erdogan and the secretive *imam* Fethullah Gülen, who operates an extensive Islamic underground organization from a walled compound in rural Pennsylvania.⁸¹ Practically, then, Erdogan and his allies' heightened confidence in their democratic powers endanger the realm of civil liberties. Yet, despite its severe imperfections, like its Jacksonian counterpart, Erdogan's populist democracy may generate future liberal democratic prospects.

Erdogan's Personal Background

A man of the people, Erdogan has humble social origins. He comes from a conservative family of recent immigrants to Istanbul, which is Turkey's commercial and cultural capital, and he was raised in a low-income neighborhood with a rough and tough reputation. As such, he represents Turkey's rising demographical groups. To give an estimate of these, suffice it to say that before the great immigration wave from the countryside to urban centers that began in the early 1950s, Istanbul's population was under a million people whereas today it is about fourteen million. From a cultural perspective, in comparison to the descendants of the historical residents of Istanbul, immigrants from the countryside and small towns are typically more adamant in their attachment to traditional values, and they are more amenable to the appeal of political Islam. Fukuyama writes that "Islamism is a reaction to the

⁸⁰ Handelman, *The Challenge of Third World Development*, 83.

⁸¹ Hasnain Kazim and Maximillian Popp, "Dangerous Friends: Power Struggle Splits Turkish Ruling Party," *Spiegel Online International* (August 21, 2013), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/power-struggle-splits-erdogan-ruling-akp-party-in-turkey-a-917823> (accessed July 17, 2014).

urbanization and displacement taking place in contemporary Middle Eastern societies.”⁸²

Erdogan’s most notable accomplishments before he attained the status of political stardom were a sixteen-year-long career in semi-professional football and a poem recitation championship in a competition organized by a national newspaper in 1973 while he was a high school student (his political opponents who allege that he is a dangerous demagogue exploit the latter accomplishment). Erdogan attended an imam and preacher high school (*imam hatip lisesi*), which is an unlikely conservative working-class alternative to Turkey’s mainstream secular secondary educational system, and later received a degree in commerce from an obscure university. His father was an authoritarian figure. “[H]e once hung Erdogan from the ceiling by his arms to punish him for cursing.”⁸³ For years, Erdogan had to hide his football career from him.⁸⁴ His mother sought to marry Erdogan with a veiled Islamic woman, but he refused on the grounds that a veiled wife would be a social hindrance to an aspiring politician. Instead, he opted for someone with an Islamic headscarf, which is a comparatively minor anomaly in genteel circles.⁸⁵ In her teenage years, Erdogan’s future wife had initially refused her older brother’s orders to don a headscarf, but ultimately gave in after being subjected to domestic violence.⁸⁶ Hence, the humble Erdogan family’s conservative authoritarian traditions stand in sharp contrast to those of the Jacksons.

Erdogan: A Political Outsider

Erdogan’s time in the imam and preacher high school was critical in exposing him to Turkey’s political Islam network and the underground Nakshibandi religious order at an early age.⁸⁷ After twenty-five years of anti-establishment grass-roots politics and a failed attempt to win public office, he was finally elected mayor of Istanbul in 1994, at the age of forty.

The results of the 1994 municipal elections took the general public by surprise. For the first time in Turkey’s electoral democracy, the Islamists had won the mayoralities of Istanbul and Ankara, the nation’s administrative capital. Surprise turned to shock when Erdogan commenced the first session of the

⁸² Francis Fukuyama, “The Future of History: Can Liberal Democracy Survive the Decline of the Middle Class?” *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 1 (January/February 2012): 55.

⁸³ Suzy Hansen, “The Strongman: Can Turkey’s Democracy Survive Its Domineering Prime Minister,” *New Republic* 242, no. 9 (2011): 16.

⁸⁴ Metin Heper and Şule Toktaş, “Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey: The Case of Recep Tayyip Erdogan,” *Muslim World* 93, no. 2 (2003): 161.

⁸⁵ “Anne Erdogan’ın Adayı, Oğul Erdogan’ın Tercihi” [Mom Erdogan’s candidate, son Erdogan’s choice], *Hürriyet*, May 16, 2004.

⁸⁶ Songül Hatisaru, “Tek kızdı, Kıskanırdık Çok Çekti Bizden” [She was the only girl, We were jealous—she suffered a lot from us], *Milliyet*, October 25, 2010.

⁸⁷ Heper and Toktaş, “Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey,” 160-161.

metropolitan administrative council by chanting an Islamic prayer (instead of the customary moment of silence for Atatürk and the founders) and, thereafter, declared himself to be the imam of Istanbul in a newspaper interview.⁸⁸ Later, he imposed religious restrictions in the premises of the municipal administration and made a series of provocative statements, including the notorious, “For us democracy is a means to an end.”⁸⁹

Erdogan’s stature as a political outsider markedly grew consequent to a poem that he recited in a campaign rally in 1997: “Minarets are bayonets, domes are helmets, mosques are barracks, believers are soldiers.”⁹⁰ The following year, he was sentenced to four and a half months in prison for “inciting people to hatred on the basis of religion and trying to set up an Islamic state,” and banned from politics.⁹¹ His mayoralty had ended abruptly.

Erdogan’s Religio-Political Appeal

The political causes and consequences of Erdogan’s removal from office by a court order can be compared to that of the so-called corrupt bargain in American history. At a time when the Turkish economy was dismal, Erdogan was perceived as a pious and therefore less corrupt administrator by the people, and his status as an Islamic victim of the secular establishment magnified his appeal. On the eve of the 2002 general elections, now a rich man,⁹² he reappeared as the spokesperson of the recently formed Justice and Development Party, although he was personally banned from running for office due to his 1998 conviction. During the campaign, Erdogan claimed that he had become committed to both democracy and Turkey’s bid for EU membership, and that the AKP had been launched as a socially conservative but economically liberal party, inspired by the example of the Christian democrats in Europe. After the AKP’s overwhelming electoral victory and a custom-tailored constitutional amendment to clear his path, Erdogan was elected to parliament in a by-election in 2003, and he was summarily appointed prime minister.

The sources of Erdogan’s dramatic shift toward a democratic rhetoric are a continual source of controversy. Skeptics attribute it to purely tactical considerations, but Erdogan’s reasons may be more complex. According to political scientist Yavuz, Erdogan realized that democracy and EU membership would help to establish “the civilian control of the military” and “freedom of religion,” a concept possibly including the re-Islamization of Turkey through legal means: “AKP is more interested in imposing religio-communal values

⁸⁸ Göksel Özköylü, “Kasımpaşalı Tayyip Nasıl Tayyip Erdogan Oldu” [How did Tayyip of Kasımpaşa become Tayyip Erdogan], *Hürriyet*, <http://dosyalar.hurriyet.com.tr/tayyip Erdogan/tayyip.asp> (accessed July 5, 2014).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Heper and Toktaş, “Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey,” 170.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁹² Zarakol, “Revisiting Second Image Reversed,” 53.

upon society and protecting religious liberties, but less focused on protecting personal liberties... ”⁹³

Unlike early to mid-nineteenth century American democrats, an ideologically tinged religious symbolism has always been an essential component of Erdogan and his allies’ political rhetoric, aura, and appeal. Erdogan, most of his cabinet, party members, and influential administrative appointments are steeped in similar *Sunni* Islamic backgrounds. As a token of their Islamic revivalist ideology and socio-religious conservatism, most men are mustached or bearded and female family members and partisan women are religiously covered (Turkey’s secular laws and conventions bar Islamically covered women from the cabinet, parliament, and bureaucracy). They have a penchant for Arabic culture, in general, and for old-fashioned Arabic and Persian words, in particular. Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party, which represents a fluid break from a past in hard-line Islamic fundamentalism, is allegedly inspired by the Justice and Development Party of Morocco. Publicly held Friday prayers are an indispensable meeting place for the party members and their supporters. Given these references, Turkey’s burgeoning grass-roots Islamic organizations have been firmly united behind Erdogan and the AKP, despite a growing rift with imam Gülen and his followers. Thus, the dismantling of Turkey’s enlightened state tradition serves to bridge the gap between the state and a vast majority of the people who felt excluded in the past, but at the cost of severely alienating Turkey’s educated urbanites and unorthodox Muslims, mainly including the *Alevis*.

Beyond the religious symbolism, Erdogan’s challenge to Turkish secularism has been gradual. As a former member of two banned hard-line Islamist political parties and briefly a political prisoner himself, Erdogan has been wary of systemic constraints. However, with consecutive landslide electoral victories in the 2007 and 2011 general elections, he has grown bolder. The retirement of Turkey’s last secular president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, in 2007, a diffused attempt by the judiciary to ban the AKP the following year, and Turkey’s waning EU prospects liberated Erdogan’s politics. Even before, he had sought to criminalize adultery and to restrict alcohol consumption for people under twenty-four years of age, but these initiatives were eventually suspended due to protests by women’s rights organizations, EU pressure, or court decisions. Recently, however, things have taken a rather dramatic turn. Erdogan explicitly stated that his goal is to foster a religious youth in Turkey.⁹⁴ Concretely, the government proceeded to phase out Turkey’s various national-day celebrations that are associated with the secular republic and its

⁹³ M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 264, 170.

⁹⁴ “Dindar Gençlik Yetiştireceğiz” [We will raise a religious youth], *Hürriyet*, February 2, 2012.

founder Atatürk,⁹⁵ introduced courses on Arabic, the Quran, and the Islamic prophet in primary and secondary schools; took legislative and administrative measures to make imam and preacher high schools a more viable alternative to secular education,⁹⁶ made Islamic chapels (*mescit*) mandatory in public places, including government offices, educational campuses, hotels, apartment blocks, stadiums, theaters, and opera houses;⁹⁷ and banned the advertisement of and restricted the sale of alcoholic beverages.⁹⁸ To crown it all, in 2013, Erdogan invalidated Turkey's secular dress code concerning public employees, teachers, and students of all ages,⁹⁹ and launched a campaign against co-ed university housing.¹⁰⁰ Concomitantly, Sadık Yakut, the deputy speaker of the parliament and fellow party member, called for an across-the-board end to co-ed education.¹⁰¹ This is understandable. As the Anglo-Saxon liberal Ferguson explains, “promoting the headscarf is part of a wider agenda to limit women's rights by introducing sharia law in Turkey, achieving gradually what was achieved much more suddenly in Iran after the 1979 Revolution.”¹⁰² Undoubtedly, in contrast to Turkey's major cities, there is more governmental pressure for religious conformity in the provinces.¹⁰³

In a 2005 cable published by *Wikileaks*, Eric Edelman, the American Ambassador to Turkey, described Erdogan as a person of “unbridled ambition stemming from the belief God has anointed him to lead Turkey.”¹⁰⁴ Yet, Erdogan is as much a pragmatic administrator as he is a religio-political idol. His supporters consider his brief tenure as a mayor to be relatively successful,

⁹⁵ Emin Çölaşan, “Bir Bayram Böyle Kutlandı” [A national day celebrated in this way], *Sözcü*, April 25, 2012.

⁹⁶ Anka, “4+4+4 Yürürlükte” [4+4+4 in force], *Cumhuriyet*, April 11, 2012.

⁹⁷ Nuray Babacan, “Operaya Kreşe Mescit” [Islamic chapels for the opera and childcare centers], *Hürriyet*, June 5, 2012.

⁹⁸ “Alkolde Bir Yasak Daha” [One more restriction for alcohol], *Milliyet*, June 2, 2014, and “Gece Alkol Satışı Yasak, Alkollü Araç Kullanana da Hapis” [Night-time alcohol sales banned, and prison for driving under the influence of alcohol], *Hürriyet*, May 24, 2013.

⁹⁹ Emre Peker, “Turkey Lifts Ban on Scarves in Offices,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Ayla Albayrak, “New Front in Turkey's Culture War: Mixed-Sex Student Houses,” *Emerging Europe Real Time—The Wall Street Journal Blogs* (November 5, 2013), <http://blogs.wsj.com/emergingurope/2013/11/05/new-front-in-turkeys-culture-war-mixed-sex-student-houses> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹⁰¹ Bülent Sarıoğlu, “TBMM Başkanvekili Yakut: Kızlı Erkekli Eğitim Büyük Bir Yanlış” [The Turkish National Assembly Deputy Speaker Yakut: Co-ed education a big mistake], *Hürriyet*, November 21, 2013.

¹⁰² Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The Six Killer Apps of Western Power* (London: Penguin, 2012), 254–255.

¹⁰³ “Afyon Valisi İçkiyi Yasakladı” [Afyon governor banned alcoholic beverages], *Sözcü*, April 27, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ David Kenner, “The Long Twilight of the US-Turkey Alliance,” *Foreign Policy Magazine Blog* (November 29, 2010), http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/11/29/the_long_twilight_of_the_us_turkey_alliance (accessed July 17, 2014).

and as the prime minister he oversaw an economic recovery process. Building on an International Monetary Fund (IMF) austerity program that was imposed by the outgoing coalition government in 2001, Turkey's per capita income increased by approximately 40 percent during the last decade.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the relatively high growth rates of the Turkish economy in times of a global downturn have been financed by an astounding national current account deficit.

For years, this chronic deficit was managed by a fixed combination of almost stable foreign exchange rates and globally high interests for local currency deposits. Turkey became an ideal destination for international speculative capital, or hot money. But, this era came to a temporary halt when the American Federal Reserve scaled down its monetary stimulus program in mid-2013. Thereafter, a string of emerging-market countries devalued their currencies. The Turkish *lira* was among the hardest hit, and there is a recurring fear of further currency devaluations and an impending financial crisis.¹⁰⁶

Despite unfavorable exchange rates during his reign, Erdogan has received loyal support from the export sector. Turkey's total exports increased from 3 billion dollars in 1980 to 152 billion dollars in 2013, and the greatest beneficiaries of this export boom have been small- to medium-sized family enterprises that specialize in labor-intensive products.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the established business elite from the era of import-substituting industrialization that is concentrated in Istanbul and its periphery, these export-oriented manufacturers are scattered throughout the socially conservative heartland of the country. Economic historian Pamuk argues that a large segment of these manufacturers had backed Turkey's earlier political Islamists but "were increasingly alienated by the inward-oriented, anti-Europe rhetoric of these parties," and they now offer "critical support to AKP for its more moderate, outward looking, pro-Europe, pro-globalization positions."¹⁰⁸ If it were not for the increasingly bitter division between the proponents and opponents of secularism, the ensuing potential for instability might have shaken their commitment to Erdogan.

Domestically, however, the greatest beneficiaries of Erdogan's economic policies have been his coterie and partisans. Over the past decade, privatization

¹⁰⁵ Eriñç Yeldan, "Dersimiz Aritmetik, Konumuz Büyüme" [Our lesson arithmetics, our subject growth], *Cumhuriyet*, March 20, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ "The Capital Freeze Index: Stop Signs," *Economist* (September 7, 2013), <http://www.economist.com/news/finance-and-economics/21584993-which-emerging-markets-are-most-vulnerable-freeze-capital-inflows-stop> (accessed July 17, 2014), and Landon Thomas, Jr., "Istanbul Skyline Reflects Cheap Dollars Now Growing Scarce," *New York Times*, August 20, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ For 1980 figures, see Şevket Pamuk, "Globalization, Industrialization, and Changing Politics in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 38 (2008): 268. For 2013 figures, see "Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri, Aralık 2013" [Foreign trade statistics, December 2013], *Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Haber Bülteni* [Turkish Statistical Institute News Bulletin] (January 31, 2014), <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=16070> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹⁰⁸ Pamuk, "Globalization, Industrialization, and Changing Politics in Turkey," 271.

of state-owned assets has been the most significant means for wealth transfer. In this model of Islamic economics, prime lands and real estate are directly acquired from the state at bargain prices, or they are acquired from private owners at market value, but their land-to-building ratio is altered by elective municipal officers after purchase, allowing for exorbitant returns to the original investment. As these procedures do not correspond to embezzlement in an immediate sense, they are not considered *haram* (sinful).

For the masses and the urban poor who are yet to gain from global economic liberalism, there are governmental social welfare programs, such as the distribution of foodstuffs and coal. The recipients typically pledge their votes “through taking an oath on the Qur’an.”¹⁰⁹

In relative terms, women are not the beneficiaries of recent Turkish economic growth. According to the Gender Gap Report 2013, the economic participation and opportunity gender gap in Turkey is the ninth highest among 136 countries, and in net score terms this corresponds to a slight decline over the last decade.¹¹⁰

Apart from his religio-political appeal and apparent success in steering the economy, Erdogan’s mob-boss style blunt talk and tough personal stance impress his followers, who find him charismatic. From a recent campaign rally in Bursa (a major industrial town in western Turkey), Shadid reported: “Mr. Erdogan strode into a stadium packed with tens of thousands of supporters with the swagger of a brawler, legs slightly apart and stooped shoulders swaying. A crowd that had waited hours grew ecstatic. Mr. Erdogan took the stage in a suit with no tie, his hard stare hidden behind sunglasses.”¹¹¹

Erdogan is confrontational in his conduct of both internal and external affairs. During a public debate in the Davos World Economic Forum that took place months before the 2009 municipal elections, Erdogan heatedly rebuked Israel’s President Shimon Peres for human rights violations.¹¹² The undiplomatic incident involving personal insults was a turning point in the traditionally amicable relations between Turkey and Israel, but in the aftermath Erdogan was hailed as a hero throughout the streets of the Middle East and personally received the Gaddafi Human Rights Award in Tripoli, Libya.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ David Shankland, “Islam and Politics in Turkey: The 2007 Presidential Elections and Beyond,” *International Affairs* 83, no. 3 (2007): 363. Also, see Umut Bozkurt, “Neoliberalism with a Human Face: Making Sense of Justice and Development Party’s Neoliberal Populism in Turkey,” *Science & Society* 77, no. 3 (2013): 372-396.

¹¹⁰ Yasmina Bekhouche, Ricardo Hausmann, Laura D. Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, *Global Gender Gap Report 2013* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2013), 361. A direct comparison of Turkey’s country rank in 2013 and 2006—when the gender gap report was first published—is not possible, given that the latest edition of the report includes twenty-one additional countries.

¹¹¹ Anthony Shadid, “Leader Transcends Complex Politics of Turkey,” *New York Times*, May 31, 2011.

¹¹² “Erdogan Storms Offstage after Exchange with Peres,” *New York Times*, January 29, 2009.

¹¹³ Anadolu Ajansı, “Kaddafi’den Erdogan’a Ödül” [Award from Gaddafi to Erdogan], *Hurriyet*, November 26, 2010.

Erdogan's Democratic Policies

Erdogan's most notable initiative in the history of Turkish democratization, or the counterpart of Jackson's bank war in our comparative inquiry, is his campaign to bring the secular-oriented military under civilian control. From a purely democratic perspective informed by theoretical abstraction, Erdogan has every right to do so. The military corps had never renounced its sense of political guardianship, toppled three elected governments between 1960 and 1980, and allegedly pressured another to resign in 1997. On the one hand, partly due to its involvement, Turkey failed to make the leap from an electoral to a liberal democracy. On the other hand, partly due to the same, Turkey is the only Muslim-majority country with some claim to the foundations of a modern liberal democracy. The military was politically obtrusive and it promoted the possibility of secular lifestyles.

Erdogan's campaign to depoliticize the military gradually turned into an Islamic blow against civil liberties and the rule of law. While Turkey's EU membership prospects seemed promising, Erdogan's AKP sponsored legislative changes in civil-military relations to meet the accession criteria, above all by tilting the power balance in the National Security Council in favor of civilians in 2003.¹¹⁴ Since then, Erdogan's quest to subdue the military has been marred by questions of justice and legitimacy. In a wave of detentions that began in 2010, more than two hundred serving and retired military officers were imprisoned for an alleged coup attempt in 2003.¹¹⁵ Nineteen of them, including the chief of the general staff between 2008 and 2010, were sentenced to life imprisonment.¹¹⁶ According to Christie-Miller, there were inconsistencies in the evidence for the coup plot: "These include references to hospitals, military installations, and other institutions that either did not exist in 2003, or had different names."¹¹⁷ Under the aegis of Erdogan, the prosecution and trials were carried out allegedly by imam Gülen loyalists in the police force and the judiciary. But, within half a year after the holy alliance between Erdogan and Gülen unexpectedly turned into a bitter turf war in late 2013, these soldiers were released by the Constitutional Court on procedural grounds.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Anadolu Ajansı, "7. Uyum Paketi Tamam" [7th harmonization package complete], *Hürriyet*, July, 30, 2003.

¹¹⁵ Şebnem Arsu, "Ex-Chief of Turkish Army Is Arrested in Widening Case Alleging Coup Plot," *New York Times*, January 5, 2012.

¹¹⁶ Jo Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak, "Turkish Court Gives 19 Life Sentences," *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Alexander Christie-Miller, "Turkey's Military Defanged: Is It Good for Democracy?" *Christian Science Monitor*, August 5, 2011.

¹¹⁸ "Turkey's Prime Minister: Of Generals, Judges, and Presidents," *Economist* (June 28, 2014), <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21605956-recep-tayyip-erdogan-seeks-backing-all-quarters-his-presidential-bid-generals-judges> (accessed July 17, 2014).

Nevertheless, since July 2011 when the top brass resigned in protest, the Turkish military has offered unconditional support to Erdogan. The political decline of the military, once the vanguard of Turkish secularism, within a decade is remarkable. It is only a matter of time before it will yield to the Islamist demand for imam and preacher high school graduates in its ranks.

Among Erdogan's other contributions to Turkish democratization are legislation to advance the social, cultural, and economic rights of religious and ethnic minorities. Mainly due to international pressures, he expressed condolences for the notorious Armenian deportations of 1915-1916, returned property seized from minority religious foundations, and opened the floodgates to Kurdish regional autonomy or independence.¹¹⁹ But, he has been less favorable to granting the latter political representation in the national parliament lest his party's majority be affected by the removal of the 10 percent electoral threshold. Another civil rights violation in Erdogan's Islamic democracy is student arrests. According to the latest official report, 2,824 student activists are behind bars in Turkey.¹²⁰ As a token of the government's intolerance for dissent, two university students campaigning for free public education were sentenced to eight and a half years in prison.¹²¹

Erdogan and the Party Press

Erdogan's interest in the mass media literally dwarfs that of Andrew Jackson's in the press. After Erdogan came to power, the Turkish media went through sizable restructuring due to governmental measures. Following an inquiry into irregular business dealings, the government seized the billionaire Uzan family's media holdings in 2004, including a popular TV station and newspaper.¹²² At the time, the public face of the family Cem Uzan was the head of the right-wing populist Young Party (GP). Formed four months before the 2002 elections, GP had come in fifth place with 7.25 percent of the national vote. Eventually, the Uzans' newspaper and television stations were sold to businessmen sympathetic to Erdogan, and in 2009 Cem Uzan was granted political asylum in France.¹²³ Turkey's second-largest media company, the liberal oriented ATV-Sabah, was

¹¹⁹ Sebnem Arsu, "Turkey Offers Condolences to Armenians over Killings," *New York Times*, April 23, 2014; Sebnem Arsu, "Turkish Government to Return Seized Property to Religious Minorities," *New York Times*, August 28, 2011; and Jonathon Burch and Gulsen Solaker, "Kurds Still Want More Autonomy, though Say Peace Effort Is Sincere," *Reuters* (January 9, 2013), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/09/us-turkey-kurds-idUSBRE9080X9201301099> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹²⁰ Dogan Heper, "2824 Öğrenci Hapiste Olursa" [When 2,824 students are in prison], *Milliyet*, August 30, 2012.

¹²¹ Selahattin Günday, "Parasız Eğitim Pankartına 8.5 Yıl Hapis Cezası Verildi" [8.5 years of prison for a free-education poster], *Milliyet*, June 8, 2012.

¹²² "Turkey Seizes 219 Companies of Uzan Family," *New York Times*, February 16, 2004.

¹²³ Laure Marchand, "La Cavale Française d'un Ex-Magnat Turc" [The French escape of the former Turkish business magnate], *Le Figaro*, October 19, 2009.

seized by the government due to alleged business irregularities and privatized in 2007. The sole bidder, Çalık Holding, bought ATV-Sabah for \$1.1 billion, with \$750 million credit from state-owned banks. Perhaps not coincidentally, Çalık Holding's general manager Berat Albayrak was the son-in-law of Prime Minister Erdogan.¹²⁴ In 2009, Turkey's largest media-group, the secular-oriented Dogan Holding, was fined \$3.7 billion (with accrued interest) for tax fraud.¹²⁵ However, Dogan Holding sold two of its prominent newspapers and a popular TV channel in 2011, and the tax dispute was settled.¹²⁶ In 2013, the media assets of Çukurova Holding were seized by the government and sold to progovernment media networks without public auction.¹²⁷ The mass media is not necessarily a lucrative business in Turkey, but fostering Erdogan propaganda is a necessary sacrifice to get government contracts.

According to Reporters Without Borders and the Committee to Protect Journalists, Turkey leads the world with at least fifty journalists in jail.¹²⁸ For the *Economist*, the tally is closer to a hundred—this is more than China and Iran combined.¹²⁹ With a few exceptions, these journalists are held under antiterrorism and related propaganda laws. Recently, more than eighty journalists lost their jobs for covering the public unrest in June 2013.¹³⁰ Due to arrests, firings, seizures, and fiscal penalties, an attitude of self-censorship has crept into the ranks of the secular Turkish media.

Erdogan's wrath is not reserved for domestic publications alone. When the *Economist* of England endorsed Turkey's main opposition, or the secular nationalist People's Republican Party (CHP), in the 2011 general elections, he accused the liberal magazine "of acting in concert with 'a global gang' and taking orders from Israel,"¹³¹ but in the previous general elections, the *Economist* had endorsed Erdogan's AKP. Then, in relation to the 2013 public unrest, he

¹²⁴ Vincent Boland, "Turkish Media Group's Sale Raises Fears of Partisan Outlet," *Financial Times*, December 6, 2007.

¹²⁵ "Press Freedom in Turkey: Don't Cross Erdogan," *Economist* (September 30, 2010), <http://www.economist.com/node/17155758> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹²⁶ "Hard Times for Media in Erdogan's Turkey," *Reuters* (December 9, 2011), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/09/turkey-erdogan-media-idUSL5E7N10N220111209> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹²⁷ "Ciner Group Acquires Seized Broadcaster Show TV," *Hurriyet Daily News*, June 1, 2013.

¹²⁸ Carl Bialik, "Seeking Meaning in Jailed-Journalists Count," *Wall Street Journal Blogs* (June 21, 2013), <http://blogs.wsj.com/numbersguy/seeking-meaning-in-jailed-journalists-count-1250> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹²⁹ "Repression in Turkey: Enemies of the State," *Economist* (May 17, 2012), <http://www.economist.com/node/21550334> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹³⁰ Emre Peker, "Turkish Newspaper's Fake Chomsky Interview Lost in Translation," *Wall Street Journal*, September 5, 2013.

¹³¹ "Turkey's Bitter Election: On the Last Lap," *Economist* (June 11, 2011), <http://www.economist.com/node/18805597> (accessed July 17, 2014).

threatened to sue the *Times* of London,¹³² scolded a Reuters correspondent,¹³³ and called *Twitter*, an online social media network, “the worst menace to society.”¹³⁴ During the one year anniversary of these antigovernmental protests, *CNN* Istanbul correspondent Ivan Watson was roughed up by the police on-air, and later the Prime Minister accused him of being a foreign agent.¹³⁵ Also in 2014, *Twitter* and *Youtube*, an online video sharing platform, were banned by the administration after material that clearly implicated Erdogan and his inner circle in graft and embezzlement were leaked by Gülen loyalists. These bans were eventually lifted by the Constitutional Court.¹³⁶ (At a later date, the progovernment cleric Karaman wrote that such donations from business to government were commendable.¹³⁷)

The Spoils System under Erdogan

The size and scope of the modern Turkish state gives Erdogan incomparably more opportunities than Jackson to put his stamp on public appointments. If anything, nepotism and partisan criteria in public appointments predate the advent of democracy in Turkey. But, whereas Jackson justified his partisan appointments with reference to his democracy and the concomitant notion of equal economic opportunities for the people, Erdogan has to keep a certain degree of silence because in his democracy the litmus test for public appointments became religious community ties and an ideological commitment to Islam. He once even nominated “a declared supporter of Islamic banking, which rules out the charging of interest, to head the central bank.”¹³⁸ Accordingly, in a leaked diplomatic cable from 2004, Eric Edelman characterized Erdogan’s appointments with reference to “incompetent or narrow-minded Islamists” and a “distrust of women.”¹³⁹

¹³² “Turkey’s Erdogan Threatens to Sue Times for Publishing Critical Letter,” *Reuters* (July 26, 2013), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/26/us-turkey-letter-idUSBRE96P12U20130726> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹³³ “Birsen Altaylı’nın Sorusuna Başbakanın Sert Cevap” [Harsh reply from the PM to Birsen Altaylı’s question], *Hürriyet*, June 3, 2013.

¹³⁴ Constanze Letsch, “Social Media and Opposition to Blame for Protests, Says Turkish PM,” *Guardian*, June 3, 2013.

¹³⁵ “Turkey’s Erdogan Calls CNN Reporter ‘Agent’ for His Coverage of Protests,” *Reuters* (June 3, 2014), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/03/us-turkey-cnn-idUSKBN0EE1J820140603> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹³⁶ “Youtube Access Restored in Turkey,” *BBC* (June 4, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-27691892> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹³⁷ Hayrettin Karaman, “Türgev ve Diğerleri (2)” [Türgev and others (2)], *Yeni Şafak*, June 26, 2014.

¹³⁸ İter Turan, “Unstable Stability: Turkish Politics at the Crossroads,” *International Affairs* 83, no. 2 (2007): 321.

¹³⁹ Maximilian Popp, “The Tribune of Anatolia: America’s Dark View of Turkish Premier Erdogan,” *Spiegel Online International* (November 30, 2010), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,732084,00.html> (accessed July 17, 2014).

Erdogan's emphasis on religion in public appointments is linked to his case against the separation of church and state. The AKP considers the bureaucracy, the courts, the universities, and the armed forces as the most serious impediments to the realization of its legitimate democratic powers and objectives. In this vein, Yavuz criticizes the Turkish Constitutional Court because it "has been very activist in defending the autonomy of professors, civil servants and judges against the government and even against citizens."¹⁴⁰ However, after the retirement of Turkey's last secular president, Sezer, Erdogan and his allies made significant inroads into the judicial system. A constitutional amendment in 2010 cut down the political autonomy of the judiciary through a court-packing measure for the Constitutional Court and a politicized overhaul of the board responsible for overseeing lower court appointments.¹⁴¹ In Sezer's last year in office, the presidents of two of Turkey's highest courts, or the Turkish Constitutional Court and the Council of State, were both modern women. In a contrast that represents a wider trend, the current president of the Constitutional Court, Haşim Kılıç, has an Islamically covered wife,¹⁴² although surprisingly the Council of State elected a female chief justice in 2013,¹⁴³ possibly as a compromise candidate between Erdogan and Gülen loyalists.

In the rigidly centralized Turkish administrative system, a similar predicament is inevitably the case for public and private university appointments. A dramatic change in Istanbul University, Turkey's oldest state-owned higher education institution, and until recently the stronghold of secularists, illustrates the point. Since 2008, its rector has been Erdogan's long-time family practitioner Yunus Söylet, who has an Islamically covered wife.¹⁴⁴ As for the former rector, Kemal Alemdaroglu, he was sentenced to sixteen years in prison for an alleged coup plot, but later released on procedural grounds.¹⁴⁵

Unlike public universities, the government does not have a direct role in private university appointments, but these institutions are also vulnerable to governmental intervention. The case of Maltepe University provides a remarkable example. A few years ago, Maltepe University Law School employed several vocal opponents of Erdogan's government. In response, national and local governmental institutions retaliated by various means. Most notably, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) reduced the quota of

¹⁴⁰ Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 66.

¹⁴¹ Şebnem Arsu and Dan Bilefsky, "Turkish Reforms Pass by Wide Margin," *New York Times*, September 12, 2010.

¹⁴² Anka, "Haşim Kılıç'ın Eşi Türbanlı, Kızı Degil" [Haşim Kılıç's wife turbaned, not daughter], *Milliyet*, October 22, 2007.

¹⁴³ "Danıştay'ın Yeni Başkanı Zerrin Güngör" [The new president of the Council of State Zerrin Güngör], *Hürriyet*, July 19, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ "Gül Seçime Bakmadı" [Gül ignored election results], *Milliyet*, December 30, 2008.

¹⁴⁵ "İşte Ergenekon Davasında Verilen Cezalar" [Here are the verdicts for the Ergenekon trial], *Hürriyet*, August 5, 2013.

incoming students to Maltepe's five-year law program from 125 to 75. The annual opportunity cost of the university per student was approximately ten thousand dollars. To overcome this crisis, the university board appointed Kemal Köymen, who has extensive work experience in Saudi Arabia and is from Erdogan's hometown of Rize (a small town in the Black Sea region), to the rectorship. Within a year, Maltepe granted an honorary doctorate to Erdogan and purged its secular faculty, and the Council of Higher Education raised its law school admission quota to 140.¹⁴⁶

Compared to other bureaucracies, the Turkish military has been relatively harder to penetrate for Erdogan and his allies. This said, political Islam's confident response to the secular Turkish military has been the increasingly well-armed police force, which was controlled by Gülen until the recent purges. The well-publicized case of journalist Ahmet Şık, who investigated the means through which Gülen held sway over the police and the judiciary, is illustrative. He was imprisoned for over a year, and his unpublished manuscript was confiscated. "The author now stands accused of being a member of a terrorist organization attempting to overthrow Erdogan's government."¹⁴⁷ The Turkish police made the global headlines in the summer of 2013 for its brutal crackdown on public protests, and it continues to oppress secular civil society in the struggle over Turkey's future.

Conclusion: The Role of Political Culture

At the height of historic contests, political passions blur the fine line between the legitimate exercise of powers by democratically elected authorities and outright abuse. In his heyday, due his personal popularity and pioneering challenge to congressional dominance in government, Jackson's opponents called him King Mob and King Andrew I,¹⁴⁸ likened his dismantlement of the national bank to Julius Caesar's taking over the Roman treasury—Caesar had used his military repute to set up a tyranny¹⁴⁹—and baptized themselves as the Whigs, which is the British term for antimonarchists.¹⁵⁰ However, Jacksonian democracy never produced despotic legislation for its white citizenry, such as what happened in an earlier period of American history with the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

In retrospect, Jackson ushered in the transformation of the White House from the presiding federal administrative office to an independent political

¹⁴⁶ Melih Aşık, "Maltepe'de Durum" [The state of affairs at Maltepe], *Milliyet*, September 15, 2009.

¹⁴⁷ Kazim and Popp, "Dangerous Friends."

¹⁴⁸ Tindall, *America*, 412, and Meacham, *American Lion*, 230.

¹⁴⁹ Rohrs, "Partisan Politics," 152-153, and Christopher Marquis, "Andrew Jackson: Winner and Loser in 1824," *American History* 43, no. 1 (2008): 56.

¹⁵⁰ Meacham, *American Lion*, 289.

authority on par with, and at times more dominant than, the other branches of the United States government, to defend the people against vested interests. Jackson achieved this feat by his aggressive use of veto powers against majorities in both houses of Congress—especially in the bank war, by his strongly nationalist stance against South Carolina’s secessionist Nullification Declaration, and by his morally problematic defiance of the Supreme Court’s decision to guarantee legal protection to Cherokee Indians against encroachments from the State of Georgia.

In that trailblazing age of democratization, a new and novel threat to free expression and individual liberty loomed on the horizon. Tocqueville, who had visited the United States during Jackson’s presidency, warned of a stifling social and political environment and a tendency to conformity in democracies, and ingeniously related these developments to mass despotism, or to the “tyranny of the majority.”¹⁵¹ But, the most somber outcome of partisan polarization in the Jacksonian era was the American Civil War.

In Erdogan’s contemporary Turkey, where Tocqueville is not part of the public debate, the American educated sociologist Şerif Mardin coined the term “neighborhood pressure” to characterize the rising pressures for religious and intellectual conformity.¹⁵² As Tocqueville argued, such conformist tendencies may be an immediate consequence of democratization, which for him meant the eradication of class differences that were characteristic of medieval Europe and the accelerating movement toward the modern equality of social conditions. Given its inherently egalitarian drive, democratization is bound to be intolerant of differences. Nevertheless, there are other currents in Erdogan’s Turkey that cannot readily be associated with the equalizing spirit of democracy. These heavily authoritarian currents may be rooted in political culture.

The culturalist approach to development is criticized for being conjectural,¹⁵³ but there is hardly any evidence linking the Islamic civilization or its values with freedom. Before the advent of modernity, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, the Ottoman Empire was more tolerant of ethno-religious minorities than the West. Its minorities paid higher taxes than Muslims but were otherwise exempt from military service. Indeed, Erdogan’s toleration of non-Muslims may be likened to the Ottoman *millet* system. Admittedly, this sense of cosmopolitanism is an inspiration for contemporary societies in the West and elsewhere that are still struggling with painful

¹⁵¹ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 235-258.

¹⁵² Quoted in Ruşen Çakır, “Mahalle Havası Diye Birşey Var ki AKP’yi Bile Döver” [There is something called neighborhood pressure which can beat up even AKP], *Vatan*, May 20, 2007.

¹⁵³ See Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (London: Profile Books, 2012), 56-63, and Richard A. Shweder, “Moral Maps, ‘First World’ Conceits, and the New Evangelists,” in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, ed. Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 168-169.

notions of skin color, racial superiority, or blood purity. However, like its Ottoman counterpart, Erdogan's sense of toleration does not extend to non-Sunni Muslims and secularists—these correspond to perversion or atheism, respectively. Just as importantly, this medieval sense of religious toleration does not agree with the modern democratic ethos and the progressive use of human freedom.

Authoritarianism in Islamic countries is not strictly related to a particular era, leader, or religious revivalist movement, although these may be exacerbating factors. Likewise, freedom and individuality in the West are not narrowly time-bound. And, a comparative reflection on the legacies of Jackson and Erdogan highlights differences in political culture by exposing their common native characteristics, which bound them to the hopes and aspirations of the ordinary people; in other words, it explains the root causes of the overwhelming support that they received from the *demos* and gauges what is legitimate or not in different political settings.

Both leaders emerged from the ranks of the ordinary people, espoused—more or less—ideologically homegrown anti-elitism, were personally scorned and politically obstructed by the elite, rendered democracy more inclusive by their accession to power, and—to our knowledge—received overwhelming public support throughout their careers. Yet, their similarities end there. First, Jackson was habituated to almost unrestrained freedom; Erdogan was conditioned in a repressive milieu, in which there was a marked tradition of fear, punishment, and obedience. Second, from democratization, Jackson understood the equality of economic opportunities for the people, and Erdogan understood the re-Islamization of politics by all means. As such, Jackson's historically momentous democratic policy accomplishment was his ill-advised war against the national bank; Erdogan's was his legally dubious case against the military. Third, both leaders sensed that they were imbued with a divine political mission, but Jackson was strictly opposed to using religion to manipulate the electorate, whereas Erdogan, in accordance with the Islamic tradition, is opposed to the separation of religion and politics. Fourth, Jackson formed a party press, principally by backing a single unofficial administration newspaper to explain and promote his administration's policies and initiatives, while Erdogan eliminated almost every vestige of opposition in the mass media by morally questionable means. Fifth, Jackson's other innovative contribution to modern representative democracy was the partisan spoils system in public appointments. In retrospect, due to the limited size and scale of the United States government in the nineteenth century, his use of the spoils system was negligible compared to a modern head of state, such as Erdogan. However, Jackson's use of the press and public appointments was designed to challenge the so-called elite domination of the American economy; Erdogan ruthlessly made use of these devices to re-Islamize Turkey and plunder public resources. This is a crucial distinction because economic justice is a prerequisite of stable democracy and the re-Islamization of politics is anathema to it. Last, following

the first American president George Washington's precedent, Jackson retired from the American presidency after two terms, or eight years, in office. In contrast, Erdogan expressed his intention to keep his grip on political power, preferably at the helm of a presidential system, at least until the centennial of the republic in 2023.¹⁵⁴ A presidential system in Turkey, where politics is highly centralized and the separation of powers at best fragile, will likely seal Erdogan's reputation as a popularly elected autocrat.

Religion factors in political culture, yet the two are not identical. In the past, the Islamic clergy (*ulema*) in the Ottoman Empire and the conservative public opinion in the modern Turkish republic have intermittently served as counterweights to the otherwise unbounded powers of the state. However, the democratic convergence of religion and politics in contemporary Turkey tends toward despotism.

In the end, time and culture are not static phenomena. As Huntington once remarked, the current "Islamic Resurgence" in the Middle East, which began in the 1970s due to a population boom, increased oil revenues, and a concomitant sense of pride, will "at some point...subside and fade into history."¹⁵⁵ If the military is subjected to civilian control and the separation of powers principle is firmly established by then, Erdogan will undoubtedly be remembered for his contributions to the founding of a liberal democracy in Turkey. For now, he is referred to as the new sultan of Turkey.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ "Erdogan's Last Hurrah (possibly)," *Economist* (June 2, 2011), <http://www.economist.com/node/18772078> (accessed July 17, 2014).

¹⁵⁵ Samune P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 120.

¹⁵⁶ Marc Semo, "Erdogan, Le Nouveau Sultan Turc" [Erdogan, the new Turkish sultan], *Liberation*, June 13, 2011.