FURKAN CAY – MURAT DEREGÖZÜ

FROM THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE SINGLE-PARTY ERA – THE CHANGING TRAITS OF PREMATURE TURKISH POPULISM
A KÉSŐ OSZMÁN BIRODALOMTÓL AZ EGYPÁRTI KORSZAKIG – A KORAI TÖRÖK POPULIZMUS VÁLTOZÓ VONÁSAI

Populism, one of the six fundamental pillars of Kemalist ideology, officially entered the Turkish constitution in 1937. However, its origins date back to the *II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi* (Second Constitutional Era) of the Ottoman Empire. Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Hüseyinzade Ali, the intellectuals of the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi, formulated Turkish populism under the influence of Russian Narodniki, although this concept was interpreted differently during and after the single-party era. Many studies assume that Turkish populism is a rigid and unchangeable concept. However, despite this assumption, it has continually renewed itself and reflected the economic and social conditions of the period. Thus, this study aims to demonstrate how the understanding and practice of populism have changed from the late Ottoman Empire period to the single-party era.

Keywords: **Turkey, Turkish populism, single-party era, narodniki, II. meşrutiyet**

A populizmus, a kemalista ideológia hat alappillérének egyike, 1937-ben hivatalosan is bekerült a török alkotmányba. Eredete azonban visszanyúlik az Ottomán Birodalom második alkotmányos korszakáig (II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi). Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu és Hüseyinzade Ali, a második alkotmányos korszak szellemi vezetői az orosz Narodniki hatására fogalmazták meg a török populizmust, bár ezt a koncepciót az egypárti korszakban és azt követően eltérően értelmezték. E feltételezés ellenére azonban folyamatosan megújult, és tükrözte a korszak gazdasági és társadalmi viszonyait. Így e tanulmány célja az, hogy bemutassa, hogyan változott a populizmus megértése és gyakorlata a késő Oszmán Birodalom időszakától az egypárti korszakig.

Kulcsszavak: **Törökország, török populizmus, egypárti korszak, narodnyikok, második alkotmányos korszak**

Authors/Szerzők:
Furkan Cay[1] (cayy.furkan@gmail.com) PhD candidate, Murat Deregözü[2] (muratderegozu1@gmail.com) PhD candidate

[1]University of Szeged (Szegedi Tudományegyetem) Hungary (Magyarország), [2]Corvinus University of Budapest (Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem) Hungary (Magyarország)

Over the last decade, populism has become a buzzword, and studies of populism have grown. However, this has caused a miscomprehension that populism contains a strict set of ideas that applies to any case. Likewise, populism as a concept applied to different political actors at different periods in Turkey. The reason for this lies in the fact that populism in Turkish has two forms: "*halkçılık*" and "*popülizm.*" The former occupied the central interest of the *II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi* (Second Constitutional Era) intellectuals and the single-party era (1923–46). In Turkish literature, it still has a very positive connotation, as the education and enlightenment of the people were the main objectives. However, the latter form has negative connotations and refers to the opposite of the "Western-liberal democratic system" (Baykan, 2017).

The main aim of the paper is to demonstrate that early accounts of "*populism-qua-halkçılık*" (Gürhanlı, 2020) had socialist traits partly due to the influence of Russian-born Turkish immigrants such as Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Hüseyinzade Ali. In contrast, the latter view (i.e., the emerging regime and single-party era), adopted the solidarist model of Ziya Gökalp. To demonstrate the differences and similarities between the early and later views, the study laid particular interest on how

understanding and practice of populism changed from 1908 to the early 1930s.

The study raises a significant question of whether the understanding and practice of populism have changed from the late Ottoman Empire era to the single-party era. It will discuss how Ottoman intellectuals heavily emphasized the differences among social classes while the single-party era ignored the existence of social classes and adopted Ziya Gökalp's solidarist view. It will investigate the way in which Ottoman intellectuals have practised populism as a means of enlightening the people, whereas single-party elites viewed populism as a way of mobilizing the social classes, gaining the legitimacy and tools for creating a modern nation.

Concerning the structure of the study, the first section gives an overview of the literature on populism-qua-halkçılık. The second section argues that early accounts of populism-qua-halkçılık can be found in the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi. This marks the beginning of intellectual freedoms ranging from the publication of magazines and foundation of associations to the introduction of political liberties and parties. Hence, populism-qua-halkçılık evolved through the contribution of Turkish intellectuals including, among others, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Hüseyinzade Ali. The third section reveals that after World War I ended, the traits of populism began to change with the lower classes were no longer being addressed as people of the "middle classes" came into prominence. It notes that Akçura's socialist features of populism lost influence while Gökalp's solidarism, including the national economy and nationalism, gained ground. Hence, the existence of the social classes was ignored. The last section investigates that during the War of Independence and thereafter, populism was practised as a means of mass mobilization, gaining the legitimacy and tools to create a modern nation. The sovereignty of the people and the will of the nation were mentioned many times. Hence, populism was embedded in such an era. As Mustafa Kemal gained a grip on power, he began to claim that there was no deep division of classes across the country, while Gökalp's solidarist ideas were adopted by the single-party regime.

Literature Review

Despite the fact that populism as an ideological discourse has been a part of Turkish politics since the late Ottoman Empire period, researchers still struggle to define what exactly constitutes Turkish populism (Karaömerlioğlu, 2017, p. 21). Indeed, much of the problem stems from the extensive flaws of populism in general, ranging from "context specificity" and "minimal definition" to "conceptual stretching" (Pappas, 2016). For example, concerning the context specificity, in Imperial Russia, populism emerged as a socialist and agrarian radical movement against the state, while in the United States it took a different shape as farmers invited the state to intervene in economic affairs. Thus, attempting to understand populism without considering the specific context of the country causes con-

fusion. Another problem comes from inconsistent usage of the term, as we call it, conceptual stretching. Even in the scholarly literature on populism, it is very common to see discussions taking place without intellectual references. We often hear the term, but we do not grasp to what it refers. Indeed, in the Turkish case, it is a greater issue because populism in Turkish has two forms: halkçılık and popülizm. The former was associated with the single-party era (1923–46), while the latter is attributed to political parties and leaders after the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) appeared in the political arena in 1946 (Gürhanlı, 2020, p. 94).

So far, there have been few attempts to distingiuish between halkçılık and popülizm. For example, Zafer Toprak drew a distinction between the two, associating the former with "intellectual populism" in developing countries and the latter with "political populism" in developed countries. He argued that halkçılık is deeply connected to the single-party era, while popülizm is attributed to the DP and thereafter. He emphasized that "intellectual populism applies to societies that find themselves, or join the caravan, in the relatively late conditions of capitalist development, in the second or third stage. At these stages, capitalism enters large peasant lands and dissolves traditional, pre-capitalist structures" (Toprak, 1992, p. 11). He noted that until 1950, which marked the first free and fair election, Turkish populism had intellectual characteristics, where "searching the national values" in the countryside and the journey to the people were the main aims. Whereas after 1950, marking the victory of the DP, we encountered political populism. The main feature of political populism is to "unite the entire nation under one umbrella" and it exploits rhetoric such as the "nation's parliament and nation's government" (Toprak, 1992, pp. 17–18).

Moreover, many researchers (i.e., Gürhanlı, 2020; Karaömerlioğlu, 2017; Toprak, 2013) pointed out that the emergence and development of populism-qua-halkçılık lie in the emergence of Turkish intellectuals alongside "*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*" (The Committee of Union and Progress). Indeed, similarly to the Russian case, populism did not materialize from the bottom up and the reason behind this can be explained through two core points. First, the Turkish peasantry was highly distanced from the core ideas of populism. Thus, intellectuals had to initiate the ideas and educate them. Second, they needed popular support with the aim of toppling the Sultan Abdul Hamid II. regime. Therefore, they had to approach the masses and persuade them (Karaömerlioğlu, 2017, pp. 21–29).

The significance of populism in the single-party era was emphasized by many researchers (Hanioğlu, 2011; Karaömerlioğlu, 2017; Karpat, 1959; Zürcher, 2004). Kemal Karpat, for instance, argued that republicanism, secularism, and populism were three core principles of the single-party regime. Nationalism indeed is the primary principle and laid the foundation of the Republic, while secularism is considered a tool to fulfil the overarching aim: the modernization of the nation. Due to popular sovereignty being the primary feature of populism, populism is considered a "social-political justification" to

ensure nationalism (Karpat, 1959, pp. 50–51). Similarly, Hanioğlu puts forward an idea that during the single-party era, despite Mustafa Kemal having an inadequate knowledge of politics, "republicanism and populism", among other principles, occupied the centre of his political worldview. If we consider the Republicanism core principle, populism becomes the backbone of republicanism. So, Hanioğlu notes that republicanism without populism was truly unimaginable for Mustafa Kemal (Hanioğlu, 2011, pp. 109–111).

Indeed, Mustafa Kemal's devotion to populism can be also seen in the official newspapers including "*Hakimiyet-i Milliye*" (national sovereignty) and "*İrade-i Milliye*" (national will). However, Hanioğlu warns that despite speaking for the people, Mustafa Kemal did not seek "government of the people" because of his belief in Gustave Le Bon's ideas of elitism. Indeed, he did not adopt every idea held by Le Bon (i.e., Le Bon's hostility to the French Revolution) but aimed to restore the revolutions and elitism. Thus, he wanted to change Le Bon's philosophy and adapt it to a new state based on revolutions and elitism together (Hanioğlu, 2011, pp. 112–113). Moreover, the distinguishing characteristics of populism in the single-party era can be summarized in Ziya Gokalp's concept of solidarism, including "national solidarity" (the interests of any group or class cannot harm the interest of the whole nation), and the "denial of class interests" (any political party or group representing a distinctive class cannot be practised) (Zürcher, 2004, p. 182). Kemal Karpat believes that the reason behind the single-party regime's insistence on solidarism lies in the idea that the existence of social classes would harm the foundation of the regime. Thus, the regime rejected the multi-party system with the justification that the economic interests of the masses can be ensured by a single party. That is to say, the ruling elites intended to nullify the need for a multi-party system (Karpat, 1959, p. 308).

Furthermore, Asım Karaömerlioğlu focused on the field of populism in the single-party era: "*köycülük*" (peasantism). He famously noticed that from the Ottoman Empire to the single-party era, the percentage of peasants significantly increased. Therefore, the single-party regime's efforts of gaining the trust of the peasantry can be seen in such an upsurge. Indeed, peasants were the main drivers of the economy as the country had pre-capitalist structures. As such, peasants were seen as a provision of the nation-state. Thus, the populist rhetoric of the will of the people and sovereignty of the nation was constantly emphasized by the ruling elites. He nevertheless warned that despite such efforts, populism in the mentioned era did not become a mass movement in political terms. This was because the ruling elites aimed to control the peasants while consolidating their power. They also used populist rhetoric to cover their elitism (Karaömerlioğlu, 2017, pp. 12–15).

Karaömerlioğlu noticed that despite the fact that peasant rhetoric was heavily practised by the single-party regime, it was highly elitist and "imposed top-down." The overarching aim of such rhetoric was to prevent the "proletarization" of the peasants while keeping them in their villages. Karaömerlioğlu acknowledged that the single-party regime aimed to uplift the "cultural" and "economic" level of peasants though the underlying aims, anti-urbanization, and anti-industrialization, overshadowed their efforts (Karaömerlioğlu, 2017, pp. 48–49).

In the early 1930s, populism gained more significance for the single-party regime. For example, in May 1931, six fundamental principles (Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Statism, Secularism, and Revolutionism/Reformism) were approved in the Congress of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*, CHF) and later in 1937, incorporated into the Turkish constitution. According to Feroz Ahmad, populism among other principles served two core purposes in the single-party era. First, it authorized the ruling elites to act as representatives of the people. Second, it annulled the "class conflict and class struggle" which were indeed in favour of the business community. However, the denial of the existence of classes began to draw heavy criticism in the party, particularly by Liberal segments in the 1930s. Nevertheless, they had to wait until 1945 to gather "based on class" (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 63–65).

Methodology

Concerning the methodological approach, firstly, we have attempted to apply "conceptual history" (the history of concepts) to investigate how the meaning of the terms such as "people," "nation" and "class" are mentioned in the articles of Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp. However, we faced obstacles in understanding the Ottoman Turkish language because it absorbed a great amount of Arabic and Persian words and was written in Arabic script. Thus, relying on primary sources became out of the question. As such, we have relied on secondary sources and cited significant authors in the field of populism (e.g., Hanioğlu; Karpat; Toprak) to demonstrate how the concepts of people, nation and class changed from the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi to the single-party era.

The Emergence of Populism-qua-Halkçılık through the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi

If one takes a glance at Western civilization in the 19th century, one can easily see advances in the political, technological, scientific, and economic spheres. These advances inevitably had an impact on Western culture and thought but, beyond the Western world, were not experienced to a great extent. The Ottoman Empire, for instance, was still struggling to catch up with the Western states by state-led modernization but, due partly to the Islamist autocracy having deep roots in the state institutions, modernization attempts were being suffocated. Nevertheless, by the late 19th century, students in the military and medical schools adopted Western thinking, and the first discontent against the autocrat Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909) arose among them. Shortly after, secret committees and thinkers who assembled in Cairo, Paris, and Geneva, followed the university students and began to be called *İttihat ve Terakki* (Berkes, 2015, pp. 389–390).

İttihat ve Terakki eventually grew considerable networks in various parts of the Balkan countries and gained significant power in the military. By 23 July 1908, military officers seized the government building in Thessaloniki and revolted against the Sultan. The Sultan made early attempts to put down the uprising though failed to do so. Accordingly, he restored the "*Kanun-i Esasi*" (Constitution) by agreeing with the insurgents' demands (Gürhanlı, 2020, pp. 103–104). It was indeed a victory of İttihat ve Terakki, and this era became known as the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi.

The II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi is very important in many respects, including the enlargement of political liberties, publication of new magazines, and foundation of new associations. Hence, during this period, the first political parties were established, many associations were set up, and printing without fear became possible. Thus, the number of magazines and newspapers increased. As an example, between 1908 and 1909, 353 magazines and newspapers were published, while in 1910 and 1911 the numbers decreased to 130 and 124 respectively (Toprak, 2013, p. 85).

The range of magazines was also remarkable, giving wide coverage to many issues from traditional and modern versions of Islam to socialism and materialism. For instance, "*İslam Mecmuası*" (*Islam Magazine*), published in 1915, covered not only matters related to religion but also education, morality, and economics. Writers of the magazine, including Ziya Gökalp, supported "*milli iktisat*" (the national economy) and "*milli sermaye*" (the national capital) while having praised the growing power of the Russian Muslim bourgeoisie. Parallel to that, a magazine named "*İştirak*" (*Participation*) supported socialism while "*Felsefe Mecmuası*" (*Philosophy Magazine*) gave wide coverage to biological materialism (Toprak, 2013, pp. 85–89). Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi brought an intellectual depth to the late Ottoman period.

Among other ideas, the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi produced early accounts of populism-qua-halkçılık. An authoritative study of Zafer Toprak, "Popülizm ve Türkiye'deki boyutları," reveals that it came to the Ottoman intelligentsia's attention through three routes. The first route was via the Balkan line due to the fact that *Narodnik* (populist) views were already gaining ground in the Balkan peninsula and these ideas had numerous impacts on the intelligentsia in the realm onwards until the late 19th century. The second route indicates the venture of Russian-born Turkish immigrants such as Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Hüseyinzade Ali. The third was through the socialist Hinczak movement, yet again inspired by the Narodniki, as Ottoman intellectuals frequently interacted with them (Toprak, 1992, p. 10). These examples demonstrate the heavy influence of Russian Narodniki on Turkish populists.

Hence, to gain a better understanding of Turkish populism, we need to first briefly grasp the Russian Narodniki. Russian Narodnism found its theoretical expression in the writings of thinkers such as Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Lavrov, Bakunin, Tkachev, and Mikhailovsky (Dogan, 2019). When "Great reforms" had taken place under the leadership of Tsar Alexander II, the Russian peasantry had been freed from the chains of serfdom, but the Russian Narodniki were not pleased with such reforms because they believed that majority of the reforms were not suitable for the social structure of Russia (Erkan, 2017). They realized the striking difference between the promises made by the Tsarist government and the poverty of Russian society. They claimed that there was no progress in terms of the economic situation of Russian society, particularly in the peasant class. For this reason, the Narodniki decided to advocate the rights of the small producer peasantry, whose land was gradually being lost to rich farmers. Thus, the Narodniki called for peasantry to revolt against Tsarism for the realization of the revolution (Haspolat, 2011).

Additionally, the Narodniki assumed that the poverty of the Russian peasantry gave them important duties, including improving the economic situation of peasants, enlightening them, and the "journey to the people." For such purposes, they removed their clothes, put on the garments of peasants and travelled across Russia by train. Sharp differences nevertheless appeared as they had seen the idealized life of peasants and the reality was utterly contradictory (Pedler, 1927).

Similar to the Narodniki, the Ottoman intelligentsia who gathered around *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths) set numerous aims, including among others the journey to the people and enlightening them. A magazine titled *Halka Doğru* (*Toward the People*) in particular, published by Türk Ocakları in 1913, provided a suitable platform for propagating such aims. The leading writers, including Yusuf Akcura, Hüseyinzade Ali, Ziya Gökalp, and Halide Edip (Adıvar), stressed the urgency of the journey to the people. For instance, Akcura put emphasis on the necessity of the education of the people and wrote that: "in order for the people, namely peasants and tradesmen, to establish schools and societies, there is a need for educated men who will come before them and guide them" (as cited in Toprak, 1984, p. 173). Similarly to that, *Türk Yurdu* (*Turkish Motherland*) magazine, published by *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (the Turkish Motherland Association) in 1911, advocated the journey to the people and encouraged intellectuals to go to rural areas and villages. Conferences and discussion programmes were organized for such purposes (Toprak, 2013, pp. 172–173). Accordingly, rural settlements and villages in Anatolia became symbolic places of purity and national values were sought in such places (Toprak, 1984, pp. 15–21).

Moreover, Anatolia drew more attention after two Balkan Wars due to the loss of its entire European territories. Such a loss was not easy on two points: first, Balkans were the culturally richest territories, and the majority of the Ottoman elites came from there. Second, it caused the arrival of millions of Muslims into Ottoman lands. Such an influx inevitably led to a change of the empire's demography as Turks constituted a greater part of the population (Zürcher, 2004, pp. 106–109). Hence, the perception of the non-Muslim subjects of the empire inevitably changed and *halk* (volk, folk) came into prominence (Özden, 2011, pp. 109–110).

Amid discussions by intellectuals, the meaning and understanding of halk have significantly altered. Halk was already known in the 19th century and used in daily life. It referred to "*peuple*" as in Western countries, but the peuple term referred to low classes (*avam*). Therefore, Halk was not an important element of decision-making in the Sultanate. It was like being referred to as "creation" in a religious sense. However, during the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi, halk no longer referred to the "sum of individuals" but gained a "collective meaning" with more depth. So, during this era, it gained a secular meaning and became a "constituent" of building the nation-state (Toprak, 2013, pp. 165–170).

Furthermore, following the Balkan Wars, intellectuals argued that Turks were no longer "*etrak-i bi idrak*" (lack of understanding), but rather "they are halk," and Anatolia, and it was time to restore their dignity" (Özden, 2011, p. 110). As Şevket Süreyya (Aydemir) famously observed:

… Now, Istanbul has gained another importance not only because it is the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, but because it is the center of a new movement that speaks to the broadest horizons where the most beautiful Turkish is spoken and the most idealist books are written. Anatolia was suddenly loved. The gloomy Anatolia of the old age, the "vulgar and uncouth Turkish", was now history. Now the name of the nation is Turkish, and the language spoken was beautiful Turkish. Turkishness was honorable greatness. The homeland was no longer called the Ottoman land, but the Turkish homeland. Even the situation of the sultan, who lived in a shadow with his bulky body in his bulky palaces, had changed. He was now a Turkish Khan. People's names were also changing. We were putting new names after our real names: Alps, Tekinler, Oguz, Borgeceneler were derived (Aydemir, 2014, p. 50).

However, even though the Ottoman intelligentsia put much effort into the construction of nation and populism, halk resisted defining themselves by their ethnic origin. Instead, they identified themselves with Islam as a supranational identity. Therefore, there was a contradiction between Ottoman intellectuals' imagining of halk and "ordinary halk" (Özden, 2006, pp. 90–91).

Moreover, while the phrase of the journey to the people remained as a focal point, intellectuals emphasized the dissimilarities between the culture of the sultanate and halk. Writers for magazines including *Halka Doğru*, *Türk Yurdu*, and *Genc Kalemler* (*Young Pens*) pointed out that Ottoman society had two components which were disconnected from each other: "*halk kültürü*" (the people's culture) and "*saray kültürü*" (the palace's culture). Halk kültürü is genuine and "pure," while the saray kültürü is multicultural and "artificial" (Özden, 2006, p. 90). This difference is noted by Ziya Gökalp, as follows:

… Turkists not only taught the elite name of the nation, but also the beautiful language of the nation. As the name they gave to the nation was taken from the people, this language was also taken from the people, both had existed only among the people. The elite had been living the life of somnambulists until then. They, like somnambulists, had a dual personality. Their real personality was the Turk, but they thought themselves Ottomans under the delusions of their somnambulism. While their real language was Turkish, they spoke an artificial language in their delirium. In poetry, they put aside their own meter and sang in artificial meters copied from the Persians (Gökalp, 1959, p. 261).

Differences accordingly came to light. Thus, it was time to awaken the nationalist feelings of halk. For this objective, Türk Ocakları and Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti carried out parallel works including the organization of conferences, initiation of literacy training, and introduction of courses in different fields. They built dormitories and schools and supported students with scholarships. Besides this, many newspapers, magazines, and books were published. The magazines included, among others, "*Türk İlleri*" (*Turkish Provinces*) "*Türk çocukları*" (*Turkish Children*), "*Tanlar*" (*Dawns*), "*Anadolulular*" (*Anatolians*), and "*Köylüler*" (*Villagers*). These magazines stimulated an awareness of the concerns regarding the origins of Turks and were followed by many books written or translated on Turkish history (Gündüz, 2007, pp. 78–79).

Populism-qua-Halkçılık During the Turkish War of Independence (1918–22)

After World War I (1914–18), the traits of populism-qua-halkçılık began to change as the need for rapid nationalization and industrialization gained ground among Turkish intellectuals. Hence, lower-income groups (e.g., peasants, artisans, and tradesmen) were no longer being addressed as the people. Rather, the people began to refer to the "middle classes." This preliminary change in traits can be seen in the works of "*Halka Doğru Cemiyeti*" (Toward the People Association), founded in 1918. It published a periodical magazine titled "*Halka Doğru*" (*Toward the People*), and the first issue came out on 1 February 1919. It primarily aimed to provide a "national identity" to the middle classes rather than the lower classes (Zeren, 2011). Such an aim can be seen in the article about "purpose and profession" (*maksat and meslek*) as follows: "our aim from the expression of the people is the layer that constitutes the middle class of the nation in terms of education and training, understanding and wisdom" (as cited in Toprak, 1984).

Meanwhile, the socialist features of the Russian Narodniki began to lose their influence while populism began to evolve through nationalism (Doğan, 2019, pp. 136–137). For example, Ziya Gökalp, until the end of the First World War, supported artisans, and tradesmen while expressing his concerns regarding the subject of industrialization. However, after the war ended, he moved toward industrialization and adopted Durkheim's "division of labor." He argued that Ottoman society was pre-capitalist and consisted of "*meslek zümreleri*" (occupational groups) which, irrespective of occupation, needed each other and benefitted from one another. However, in Western countries, classes are sharply drawn, and conflict is inevitable. For instance, in a capitalist system, the bourgeoisie exploits the workers, whereas in socialism workers exploit the bourgeoisie (Toprak, 2013, pp. 284–291). Hence, he con-

cluded that the existence of social classes imposes a threat to social structure. He accordingly began to develop his solidarist ideas with the combination of nationalism and national economy (Toprak, 2013, pp. 281–282).

Gökalp adopted French solidarist ideas with changes based on Ottoman social circumstances. Hence, he imagined solidarism as "*İçtimai halkçılık*" (sociological populism). His distinct solidarism was a mixture of "*bireycilik*" (individualism) and "*toplumculuk*" (socialism). As a way of achieving social justice, "*artı değer*" (plus value) occupied a central place in his writings. For Gökalp, artı değer had to be used for "*sosyal hizmetler*" (social services) and people in need. Thus, his solidarism stretched from social insurance to free education (Toprak, 2013, pp. 295–296).

Taha Parla nevertheless warns that while Gökalp's solidarism overlaps with socialism, it refuses Marxist ideas. His sociological populism adopts private property and capitalism but refuses liberal democracy (Parla, 1985, pp. 42–45). Hence, he finds the most appropriate term for Gökalp's solidarism to be "*halkçı demokrasi*" (populist democracy), that opposes liberal democracy and Marxism both (Parla, 1993, pp. 183–186).

For all his debatable ideas, Gökalp's arguments were adopted by the single-party regime. His ideas became a sort of regime ideology which was supported by "solidarism," "nationalization" and "national economy" (Doğan, 2019, p. 138). Thereafter, the single-party regime ignored the class struggle and division of classes as famously written by Gökalp in "*Yeni Mecmua*" (*New Magazine*):

The presence of many strata or classes within a society indicates that there is no internal equality. Consequently, the aim of populism, by removing the differences of group and class from the different groups of the society to the professional groups that are born only by the division of labor. In other words, populism complements its philosophy on this motto: There is no class but a profession! (As cited in Toprak, 1977, p. 92)

Populism-qua-Halkçılık during the Single-Party Era

During the Turkish War of Independence, populism-qua-halkçılık had many features, including, among others, gaining legitimacy, mobilizing the social classes, and acting as a tool for creating a modern nation. Initially, it was practised as a way of gaining legitimacy. Once resistance began, the opposite authorities of the "Istanbul government and Ankara government" had a deep conflict over the claim of final authority across the country. To gain legality, the Ankara government opened *Büyük Millet Meclisi* (the Grand National Assembly) on 23 April 1920 (Berkes, 1998, p. 436).

Despite the Ottoman assembly being shut by the allied powers, the Istanbul Government consistently made efforts to discredit the Ankara government. It attempted to present Mustafa Kemal and his companions as non-religious. In response, Mustafa Kemal practised populism as a means of gaining the support and trust of different social classes. For instance, when he became the president of the assembly on 24 April, he gave a speech to the deputies (Mutlu, 2014, pp. 92–93). In his speech, the importance of "national sovereignty and national will" was emphasized as follows:

… Our Grand Assembly gathered with extraordinary authority because of this necessity and obligation caused by the constitutional situation and our law and to ensure national sovereignty above all. The fact that the elections were held with full urgency and with warm interest, shows that our legal position is understood and assumed with the same opinion by the whole nation. Besides, the formation and principles of our Great Assembly show that it is based on the national will sincerely and with great power. (TBMM Kültür, 1987, pp. 49–50)

As his speech ended, the assembly decided to set up a commission to form the new constitution. On 18 August 1920, the commission unveiled the results and favoured the sultanate supporters. While drafting the constitution, many deputies agreed on the protection of the sultanate and caliphate (Berkes, 2015, pp. 499–500). Accordingly, "*Teşkîlât-ı Esâsîye*" (the Fundamental Organization) was ratified by Büyük Millet Meclisi and became the first constitution of the modern Turkish state.

Concepts including, among others, "the people," "will of the nation" and "the popular sovereignty" were addressed many times in Teşkîlât-ı Esâsîye. It is very significant because it later became a guide for the single-party regime. The first article stated that "sovereignty is vested in the nation without condition. The governmental system is based on the principle of self-determination and government by the people." The following article emphasized that "executive power and legislative responsibility is exercised by and concentrated in the hands of Büyük Millet Meclisi which is the sole and real representative of the nation" (Güneş, 2020). Hence, it can be claimed that regardless of the deputies' ideological stance, populism was embedded in this epoch.

Furthermore, parliamentary debates can provide us with an understanding concerning the populism of the era. There were indeed various deputies who comprehended populism as "direct democracy" while associating the people with lower-income groups. As an example, Soy-salhoğlu İsmail Suphi Bey emphasized the divisions between peasant and civil servants (as a means of elites of the country) as follows:

The class of civil servants was convinced that they were virtually grateful to the administration in this country, and they always said that they have a right of authority over the peasant, otherwise the country cannot be governed. Consequently, the masters made a lot of mistakes by living on the back of this country, by acting on the back of this country, as much as the class of the civil servant is at fault with his lack of intellectuals and his not understanding the country. (As cited in Köker, 2007, p. 141)

However, Mustafa Kemal regarded such arguments as "radical democracy" and distanced himself from them (Köker, 2007, pp. 138–143). He was aware of deep divisions, though refused the division of classes and adopted Gökalp's solidarist model (Doğan, 2019, p. 139).

Moreover, alongside nationalism, populism was a chief ideological component of Mustafa Kemal's upcoming occupations. As the War of Independence ended, he intended to carry out reforms to prevent the danger of another collapse and create a modern society. Thus, the necessity of a popular political party emerged thereafter. On 6 December 1922, he expressed his intention to establish a party as follows:

To be worthy of the respect and trust shown to me from every class of the nation, even from the furthest corners of the Islamic world, I will be honored forever, as a humble person of the nation, to dedicate the good of the country until the end of my life. After peace, based on the principle of populism, I intend to form a party called the People's Party. (As cited in Kodal, 2020, pp. 2615–2616)

Shortly after his speech, he began travelling across Western Anatolia and visited various places (Ekici, 2017, pp. 353–354). He gave many speeches regarding his intentions for the People's Party. He gave early signs that class struggle would not be taken into consideration. From his viewpoint, the existence of the classes was essential, but they did not clash with each other. Even though they did not follow the same interests, they were "complementary to each other." Hence, the "rights" and "happiness of all classes" would be ensured by the People's Party (as cited in Canpolat, 2020, p. 381). His speech indeed proved that Gökalp's solidarist ideas based on the refusal of class struggle and the support of the cooperation of the classes would be a guide for the People's Party.

Furthermore, the election programme, known as "*Dokuz Umde*" (Nine Principles), was announced on 8 April 1923, and formed the ideological backbone of the People's Party. It was indeed very similar to the first two principles of Teşkîlât-ı Esâsîye. The first principle emphasized the unconditional sovereignty of the Turkish nation, while the second principle stated that the sole representative of the nation was Büyük Millet Meclisi (Ekici, 2017, pp. 353–354).

On 9 September 1923, the People's Party was officially founded. Subsequently, it set various goals, such as increasing the people's level in terms of cultural and economic means. However, as Karaömerlioğlu noted, the single-party regime could not succeed over its objectives. The reason behind this was that the peasants and lower classes were merely seen as a means of "extending the party base" and a "barrier against social uprisings." As such, populist rhetoric mainly helped republican elites to hide their elitism and avoid possible class struggles. They even pursued a policy to keep peasants in their villages with the rationalization that possible mass immigration to cities from villages would cause a conflict between classes (Karaömerlioğlu, 2017, pp. 12–15).

At the turn of the 1920s, the single-party regime consolidated its power. As such, the ruling elites considered the existence of the assembly sufficient for people's demands (Köker, 2007, pp. 136–138). Consequently, the motto of "*halk için halka ragmen*" (for the people despite the people) became the prevailing rhetoric of the ruling elites. It is not surprising that Gokalp's phrase of "*Sınıf yok meslek var*" (no class but an occupation) justified their arguments for covering class struggles. In case of disapproval, they could claim that everybody was equal and represented by the state (Karaömerlioğlu, 2017, p. 38).

Solidarism and the Desire for the Construction of Middle Classes

Despite the fact that solidarism was adopted by the single-party regime, we can also see the desire for increasing the percentage of the middle classes in society. Indeed, the reason behind this can be explained by three core points: the provision of services for industry, settlement of reforms, and adoption of the Western lifestyle. First, due to long-lasting wars, the country was economically and socially in ruin, meaning that trade suffered, foreign investment ended, and non-Muslims fled. Despite industry still being in need of services, Muslims had no experience in the economic field (McCarthy, 1983, p. 144; Ozay, 1983, pp. 51–52). Thus, to provide services for industry and fill the vacuum, the middle-class Muslim bourgeoisie was needed. Second, the middle classes had great significance for the settlement of democracy. As Ottomans had many reforms including the *Tanzimat Fermanı* (Imperial Edict of Reorganization), *Islahat Fermanı* (Reform Edict), and Kanun-i Esasi, due to the lack of middle classes, reforms could not be adopted and institutionalized. However, when ruling elites founded the republic, they aimed to institutionalize and create "middle classes" which could protect and continue the republic (Karpat, 2010, pp. 40–45). Third, the modernizing reforms that took place in the 1920s needed urban middle classes who had adopted the Western lifestyle and secularism (Göle, 1997, p. 52). Thus, the reasons for seeking the construction of middle classes can be seen in these three core points.

Conclusion

The understanding and practice of populism significantly changed from the late Ottoman era to the early Turkish Republic. During the II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi, the peasantry and lower classes occupied the central interest because Ottoman intellectuals considered the lifestyle of peasants pure and spiritually rich. In contrast, during the War of Independence and thereafter, the middle classes came into prominence. The reason behind this cannot be understood without considering the growing demand for the national economy and nationalization. Hence, during the 1920s, the existence of the middle classes was considered more appropriate for the construction of the nation-state. However, we cannot still claim that the peasantry lost all attention. The peasants and lower classes were still heavily praised, but this remained only at the rhetoric level. As Gökalp's solidarist philosophy was adopted by the single-party regime, it was good rhetoric for hiding deep class divisions.

The study also discussed the evolution of populism-qua-halkçılık from 1908 to the 1930s. It argued that the similarities between the Narodniki and the Second Constitutional Era populism-qua-halkçılık lay in the Narodniki ideas of

a journey to the people and the enlightenment of peasants. Similar arguments were put forward by Ottoman intellectuals as well. The leading magazines *Türk Yurdu* and *Halka Doğru* published many discussions in regard to encouraging intellectuals to go to villages and rural areas to educate people. So, the heavy influence of the Russian Narodniki on populism-qua-halkçılık is hard to deny.

As a result of conducting this research, we suggest that populism in Turkey cannot be understood without a detailed historical analysis of populism-qua-halkçılık. While this study does not offer a conclusive answer to the question of how the understanding and practice of populism changed from the late Ottoman era to the single-party era, it certainly raises important questions and encourages further research in the field.

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