1 INTRODUCTION

The year 1980 was a critical turning point for Turkey. It was marked by a violent military coup that followed a decade of political instability, economic deterioration, and civil strife between nationalist and leftist groups. The military sought to reinstate political and economic stability under its authoritarian supervision. However, the coup had far-reaching, unintended consequences beyond the generals' immediate goals. Turkey experienced a radical transformation between 1980 and 2017, when a slim majority voted in favor of what was effectively a one-man authoritarian regime in a controversial referendum. This book examines the dramatic changes that took place in Turkey during this period.

Between 1980 and 1983, when the civilians came back to power, the generals brought the turmoil on the streets under control and continued with the policies of global economic integration that the pre-coup government had initiated. By the end of 1982 they had introduced a new Constitution that restricted political rights, increased the powers of the state, and expanded the scope of religious life to prevent the appeal of leftist ideologies to the young. In the first two decades after the coup, the country adjusted to life under the new Constitution and struggled to democratize in a globalizing world that was increasingly shaped by a neoliberal economic order. This period was characterized by prolonged political and economic instability, which culminated in an economic crisis in 2001. After the crisis the secular political elites lost power to new elites that were rooted in Islamic politics and organized under the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party).

The new elites supported democratization when they first came to power, but they soon changed course, using their majoritarian rule to restrict civil liberties, repress political opposition, and build an authoritarian state.

Turkey, a country that had been held up as a model for Muslim democracy in the Middle East during the first decade of the new century, soon became authoritarian and internationally isolated.[1] After years of rapid growth and rising incomes, the economy slowed down and unemployment began to rise. Freedom House placed Turkey's political regime in the "not free" category in its 2018 report, citing "a deeply flawed constitutional referendum that centralized power in the presidency, a government that replaced elected mayors with government appointees, arbitrarily prosecuted rights activists and other perceived enemies of the state, and continued its purge of state employees."[2]

The trajectory of Turkey's political regime since 1980 is not unique. According to datasets and indices that track political regimes around the world, the number of democracies increased and authoritarian regimes declined from the 1980s to the first decade of the new century. This trend reversed around 2006, however, and the number of democracies has declined since then, while the numbers of various types of authoritarian regimes have increased. More countries experienced declines in political rights and civil liberties than have registered gains.[3] This recent shift from democracy toward authoritarianism has not been limited to low-income countries. Until recently one of the enduring findings of democratization theory had been that democratic countries that achieved a certain level of economic development and per capita income rarely slid back to authoritarianism.[4] In recent years, however, political regimes in a number of middle- and middle-high income countries in different regions of the world – Venezuela and Hungary as well as Turkey – have also moved in the direction of authoritarianism. The aim of this book is to provide an in-depth analysis of the Turkish case.

[1] Vali Nasr, "The Rise of 'Muslim Democracy'," *Journal of Democracy* 16, 2, 2005, p. 23.
[2] Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2018*, 2018, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2018.
[3] Ibid.; also Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufmann, *Dictators and Democrats: Masses, Elites and Regime Change*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, 339–58; David Waldner and Ellen Lust, "Unwelcome Change: Coming to Terms with Democratic Backsliding," *Annual Review of Political Science* 21, 2018, 93–113.
[4] Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization, Theories and Facts," *World Politics* 49, January 1987, 155–83.

The decline of democratic institutions and a turn toward a religiously colored authoritarianism in Turkey took place as a result of the majoritarian policies of governments that came to power through competitive, democratic elections. As popular support for the AKP increased, the party imposed increasingly unfair terms of competition in elections. In turn, as the playing field became skewed, the government's political repression escalated and electoral support from half the population continued. This book is therefore also an account of what makes the citizens of a democracy support authoritarian rule or how political elites use their power to shape and manipulate the preferences of their constituency for authoritarian ends.

We assume that, in order to count as a democracy, a political system must fulfill certain minimum procedural requirements and protect a range of political and civil rights. The procedural requirements include universal suffrage, free and fair elections, a competitive party system, the rule of law, and accountability measures. The rights that must be guaranteed include freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of association, and freedom of religion for all citizens, including those in the minority. The procedural minimums help ensure that the people rule themselves by selecting representatives, and that they can replace them when they wish, while the protection of rights ensures that all citizens are treated as free and equal. The separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of a state is a necessary if not sufficient institutional safeguard of these two fundamental requirements of democracy.

We focus on both structural factors and the role of actors in global and domestic contexts to explain Turkey's struggles with democracy and its descent into authoritarianism. The global context contributed significantly to the changes inside Turkey. Some of the key actors in Turkey's politics that have challenged the state to democratize since 1980 – Islamists, Kurds, and women – were inspired by and responded to the global ideas and movements in identity politics and human rights, including ethnic rights and women's rights. All of these groups were supported by global networks. The Islamic movement appealed to human rights as it contested the secular nature of the Turkish state to expand religious rights. The Kurdish movement challenged the ethnic nationalism of the Turkish state in order to broaden the parameters of its ethnic rights as a dictate of democratic rights. Women, who had benefited most from secularism, and who were arguably the symbols of

the secular modernizing Turkey, mobilized and criticized the illiberal nature of human rights in the country. They began to demand the expansion of their rights as individual women, some with their secular identities, others with their religious or ethnic identities.

In the global political context, Turkey's drive for membership in the European Union had a major effect on democratization and its descent to authoritarianism. The EU promise early in the new century to formally accept Turkey as a candidate for membership unleashed powerful forces inside the country that advocated for political reforms and the elimination of the vestiges of the military regime. However, the EU lost its ability to influence Turkey's politics and was unable to provide support for democratization after the governments of France and Germany turned against Turkey's membership. While Turkey's European allies professed doubts about its ability to democratize, Turkey's governments provided even more grounds for them to doubt its commitment to democracy, thus estranging it from both the European Union and the United States.

Rapid urbanization was another important factor that prepared the context for the dramatic political changes that have taken place in recent decades. Since the end of World War II millions of people have migrated from rural areas across the country to urban areas in the more developed western regions of Turkey. Waves of migration intensified over time. In the aftermath of the military coup in 1980, the secular parties, deeply divided amongst themselves, were unable to respond adequately to these demands. The Islamist parties, which were better organized, began to capture municipalities in local elections during the 1990s. Local governments that were controlled by Islamist parties and the AKP government have done a better job of providing urban services and incorporating the voices and demands of recent migrants into national politics.

Structural economic factors also contributed to the rise of the AKP to power, and its success once in power. Prompted by global forces and institutions, governments in Turkey began to adopt new economic policies in 1980. These market-oriented policies helped increase both exports and incomes, but they also produced economic instability. The rise of manufacturing exports and the spread of industrialization to new centers across the country facilitated the rise of conservative business groups, which, in turn, supported the emergence and rise of the AKP as a moderate Islamist

party. The economic difficulties of the 1990s brought high inflation, growing unemployment, and increasing economic inequalities, culminating in a severe economic and financial crisis in 2001, which played a key role in the AKP's electoral success the following year. Strong economic performance in the early part of the AKP era was accompanied by increased access to healthcare, education, and other government services for large numbers of people, boosting the party's electoral support in later years.

It was in this context that the mutual distrust between secular and Islamic-rooted elites led to the decline of democracy. The entrenched secular elites of the Republic, who had led the country since the 1920s and adopted Western institutions, precipitated their downfall because of their illiberal understanding of democracy. In turn, the Islamist elites who replaced them and who promised to democratize the polity undermined basic democratic institutions. They disregarded the rule of law – first in self-defense, and then in their ruthless pursuit of power. The electorate that was mobilized by a political leader who monopolized power did not prioritize democratic norms. Despite increasingly biased elections – and, to a certain extent, because of them – nearly half of the electorate continued to vote for the party that promised and delivered economic gains and religious freedoms.

The conflict between the secular and Islamic elites that fostered AKP authoritarianism unfolded gradually. The civilian government that returned in 1983 after the coup in 1980 tried to democratize the polity despite the dictates of the Constitution, yet it also consolidated the authoritarian legacy of the coup and the Constitution because it suited its interests to do so. The Anavatan Partisi (ANAP, the Motherland Party) founded by Turgut Özal facilitated the global integration of the country, sowed the seeds of Islamization, and entrenched the new regime's tendencies toward majoritarian politics during the 1980s. These policies would have economic and political implications for both democratization and authoritarianism in later decades. Moreover, the closure of all political parties after the military intervention resulted in the fragmentation of the secular political parties.

The secularist establishment, led by the military and the judiciary, responded to the growing Islamist influence, mostly using coercive methods, even though the generals had originally intended to use Islam to prevent the spread of leftist ideologies. The secularists

opposed the expansion of Islamic visibility in public life, which included female students wearing headscarves in universities and the closing of Islamic-rooted parties. While these measures appeared to be successful in the short term, they accelerated the disintegration of the secularist nationalist vision in the long run. Islamist parties that were set back by secular institutions persevered, and returned to the political scene. In the process, they moderated their policies, bolstered their resilience, and mastered the skills of democratic politics. The emergence of an Islamic bourgeoisie seeking economic integration with the West helped them reshape their political goals and ideology.

During the AKP's second term in power the secularist military and judiciary threatened to close the party despite its electoral support and the parliamentary majority it enjoyed. In response, the Islamist elites moved to consolidate their power. The coalition the AKP formed with the Islamist Gülen movement played a crucial role at this stage in breaking down the secularist opposition. The Islamist Gülen movement had been steadily increasing its power in the state bureaucracy since the 1980s. The AKP–Gülen coalition showed little respect for democratic rules including the separation of powers. The Gülenist judges and the Gülenist media helped the AKP to undermine the military through sham trials that used fabricated evidence. To establish control over the military, the AKP did not hesitate to violate the law.

In later years the AKP and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, continued to ignore the rule of law and to undermine the separation of powers – first by controlling the media, and then deepening their control over the judiciary. They polarized the society in order to secure the support of their conservative constituency and to convince the electorate that only the AKP could provide economic stability and religious freedoms. In their populist bid for more power, the new elites hollowed out the concepts of democracy, judicial autonomy, and rights and liberties. They dispensed with norms and prevented the electorate from hearing the opposition. A fragmented and disorganized opposition was not able to counter Erdoğan's charismatic control.

In the next section we present summaries of the chapters in the book. Each chapter examines the different structures and agents of change in politics, society, and economy since 1980. However, we also weave a story of the major transformation of the country from a Westward-looking, faltering, illiberal democracy to a religiously colored one-man authoritarianism. We piece together chapters on

political developments with those on forces and agents of change to throw light on this radical development.

In the rest of this chapter we also provide a background to our study with an overview of the social, economic, and political developments in Turkey, from the founding of the Republic after World War I to the military coup in 1980. Our purpose is to highlight the main issues of contention and the political and social forces in domestic politics. We focus in particular on secularism and nationalism, the two building blocks and ultimately the weakest links of the Republic that were the most consequential in shaping Turkey's predicament during the twentieth century, especially in the years after 1980. The ideologies of secularism and nationalism in Turkey reinforced one another as their proponents sought to displace Islam from the public realm while simultaneously manipulating it to reinforce their hold over the people. Military tutelage was also an important reality, and as such, the military was a major actor in Turkish political and economic life. We give a brief history of the periodic military interventions that shaped the power dynamics and the key players on the political stage.

Chapter Summaries

One way to begin to understand the political changes that have taken place in Turkey since 1980 is to focus on the rapid urbanization process that started after World War II. Chapter 2, entitled "A Long Wave of Urbanization," focuses on the main contours of this process, which was accompanied by rising economic inequalities and social and spatial segregation. It argues that as politics in the urban areas was rapidly transformed in the aftermath of the military coup of 1980, the secular parties were unable to respond adequately to the material needs of the migrants, or to appeal to their ideological concerns. The growing appeal of Islamist parties in the outlying districts of the urban areas thus rested not only on their religious message but also on their ability to provide many urban services while incorporating the recent migrants into the political process.

Chapter 3, entitled "From Military Rule to Civilian Politics," examines the transfer of power to civilians in the context of the illiberal 1982 Constitution prepared under military rule. The center-right ANAP, in power from 1983 to 1991, benefited from the military coup. It was able to preempt opposition to its unpopular economic policies

because the new Constitution restricted civil liberties and political competition. Yet the ANAP governments also initiated a process of democratization and applied for membership in the European Union. They undertook a liberal transformation in trade, bureaucracy, and culture, and also set the stage for the advent of Islamist political parties. The weak coalition governments of the 1990s that followed the ANAP rule struggled, but mostly failed, to democratize the country.

The Islamically rooted AKP came to power in 2002 with the promise of democratizing the country. Chapter 4, entitled "Islamists in Power," examines the emergence, success, and transformation of the AKP under Tayyip Erdoğan. It explores, in the Turkish context, the paradox of democracy where strong majorities undermine democratic regimes. During its early years in power the AKP government worked to democratize the country to meet the requirements for EU membership. As it increased its support from about one-third in 2002 to almost half of the electorate in the elections of 2007, 2011, and 2015, the AKP turned illiberal and increasingly authoritarian. It first dismantled the media, then violated the legal process so as to control the military, and ultimately undermined the separation of powers. To its conservative supporters it promised economic and political stability as well as expansion of religious freedoms, at the cost of repressing freedoms for the other half of the population. Political changes that began with the 1980 military coup thus culminated in the establishment of a one-man rule. The chapter also explores the implications of these radical developments of the AKP era for the educational and cultural institutions of the secular Republic.

Chapter 5, entitled "Uneven Economic Development and Domestic Politics," examines the evolution of Turkey's economy and the interaction between the economy and politics since 1980. Just as the military coup ushered in a new era in Turkey's politics, a new era for the economy began with the launch of neoliberal or more market-oriented policies earlier in the same year. Of the new economic policies and institutions that were adopted with the support of the IMF, those that concerned relations with the global economy – most importantly trade liberalization, the emphasis on exports, and the lifting of restrictions on international capital flows – have remained intact since 1980. Along with the Customs Union signed with the European Union in 1994, these policies opened Turkey's economy to greater integration with the world economy. Greater reliance on exports and global capital flows combined with

political instability resulted in more frequent fluctuations and greater economic instability. Even more importantly, uneven economic growth and more than doubling of per capita incomes since 1980 did not make Turkey's democracy stronger or more stable. The economy played important roles in the rise of Islamist parties, their rise to power after the national elections in 2002, and the continued electoral success of the AKP since. However, the AKP leader Erdoğan's continued pursuit of pro-growth policies with funds borrowed from abroad just as global liquidity was drying up and interest rates were rising made Turkey's economy increasingly vulnerable in later years.

A major obstacle to Turkey's democratization after the 1980 coup was its militarist response to the Kurdish revolt in the country. Ethnic Kurdish nationalism radically challenged the Turkish Republic, which had been conceived as a homogenous nation-state by its founding fathers. Chapter 6, entitled "The Kurdish Revolt: Nationalism and Ethnicity," examines the emergence of armed conflict and traces its development and consequences on both the Kurdish and the Turkish sides. As the Turkish side gained military victories, the Kurdish side extended its appeal for recognition of Kurdish ethnic identity to a broader electorate and deepened its hold in the politics of the country. Finding a resolution to the Kurdish issue without falling prey to narrow ethnic nationalism on either side remains a major obstacle to democratization in the country.

Chapter 7, "Between Europe and the Middle East," examines Turkey's foreign relations since 1980. In the bipolar world of the Cold War era Turkey was part of the West, and its foreign policy remained the domain of the civilian and military elites. The end of the Cold War presented opportunities as well as risks and uncertainties. Nonetheless, Turkey's pursuit of a liberal democracy and a market economy, combined with greater political and economic integration with the European Union, kept it anchored inside the Western alliance until recently. As Turkey's prospects for EU membership faded after 2005, a new foreign policy, formulated and implemented by Erdoğan and the AKP, aspired to establish Turkey as a regional power that was independent from the West. Instead, it exposed Turkey to the civil war in Syria and led to continuing tensions with the governments in the region. Even more importantly, growing authoritarianism at home and the new foreign policy edged Turkey away from the Western alliance and toward greater cooperation with Russia.

The challenges to the Republican project of modernity and demands for democratization were not confined to the Islamists and the Kurds. The founding of the Turkish state was intimately linked to the expansion of opportunities for women. The Turkish state and its women prided themselves on the extensive civil and political rights that had been recognized in the context of the modernization process during the 1920s and 1930s. However, following the military intervention of 1980, and in the context of second-wave feminism in the West, women began questioning the feminist tradition of the Republic. They criticized the state for its patriarchal and instrumental relation to women's rights, as they demanded substantive rather than formal rights and sought to expand their choices. Chapter 8, entitled "Women's Call for Democracy," focuses on the women's movement as it extended beyond the secular feminists to include Islamist women, who were demanding the right to wear headscarves in universities, and Kurdish women, who took a stance against the Kurdish and the Turkish patriarchy and differentiated themselves from the Turkish feminists. The chapter reviews how women with different ideologies have made a difference in Turkish political life by mobilizing to democratize its laws and introducing new social values. It also problematizes their confrontation with the rising authoritarianism that poses a direct threat to their rights.

Chapter 9 concludes with a summary assessing the transformations since 1980 in the context of rapid urbanization, uneven economic development, globalization, and failed democratic politics. The unintended consequences of the 1980 military coup weakened Turkey's secular democratic institutions. The secular elites made mistakes, and the Islamist elites capitalized on them. The mutual distrust and polarization between the two precipitated the turn to authoritarianism. The contentious referendum of April 2017 and the elections in the following year formalized the establishment of a new one-man regime.

Transition from the Ottoman Empire to a Nation-State

Turkey was established as a Republic in 1923, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I. The founding elites of the Republic had led a successful struggle against the post-war occupation of parts of Anatolia and the capital, Istanbul, by Greece and the Allies. This success provided legitimacy to the new state. The war of