

# The international relations of ‘bourgeois revolutions’: Disputing the Turkish Revolution

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## Abstract

The study of revolutions is at the forefront of the growing field of International Historical Sociology. As International Historical Sociology scholars have sought to uncover the spatio-temporally changing character of international relations, they have come a long way in overcoming ‘unilinear’ and ‘internalist’ conceptions of revolutionary modern transformation. In this article, I re-evaluate the extent to which the International Historical Sociology of ‘bourgeois revolutions’ has succeeded in remedying unilinear conceptions of the transition to modernity. I argue that ‘consequentialist’ approaches to the study of bourgeois revolutions tend to obscure the radically heterogeneous character of revolutionary transformations, both within and outside Western Europe. Drawing on Political Marxism and Robbie Shilliam’s discussion of Jacobinism, I first provide a non-consequentialist reading of the revolutions of modernity within Western Europe, and then utilize this reinterpretation to provide a new interpretation of the Turkish Revolution (1923–1945). My aim is to demonstrate that a non-consequentialist conception of ‘bourgeois revolutions’ will enable us to historicize and theorize more accurately the co-constitution of international relations and revolutionary processes, hence providing a stronger foundation for the International Historical Sociology of modern revolutions.

## Keywords

Capitalism, historical sociology, international system, Jacobinism, Marxism, Middle East, revolution, Turkey, uneven and combined development

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## Introduction

Since the historical sociological turn in International Relations (HSIR), there has been a resurgence of interest in the study of revolutions (Anievas, 2015; Halliday, 1999; Lawson, 2004; Matin, 2013; Morton, 2011; Shilliam, 2009; Teschke, 2005). As HSIR scholars have begun to uncover the historicity of the modern international system, revealing international relations' incomprehensibility via an approach based on a timeless logic of 'anarchy', they have become increasingly involved in the study of revolutions. This is understandable given that, according to one estimate, since 1492, over half of world history has been punctuated by revolutionary and counter-revolutionary situations (Martin Wight, quoted in Anievas, 2015: 842). Furthermore, revolutions have gained new spatio-temporal dimensions since the 20th century as the wave of modern revolutions, losing steam in the West, has permeated the non-Western world. A multiplicity of revolutionary movements consequently emerged under new spatio-temporal circumstances, giving birth to novel conditions of being 'modern'. From the revolutionary uprisings in the first part of the century in Russia, Mexico, Persia, Turkey and China, to the upheavals of the Cold War years in Egypt, Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, Iran and elsewhere, revolutions generated new socio-institutional forms that altered the tempo and substance of international activity, thereby resetting the conditions of entrance to global modernity (Lawson, 2005: 474).

If the study of the modern world order is inescapably grounded in the study of revolutions, the most immediate challenge that confronts us is the question as to how to theorize the relation between revolutions and the international system. Indeed, this has been a formidable task for IR. For one thing, neo-realism (even when it moves beyond its traditional unwillingness to analyse internal processes) invokes revolutions only to reassert the persistence of 'anarchy', that is, to show how even the most revolutionary states eventually conform to the dictates of the international system (e.g. Walt, 1998). Of course, there are alternate accounts that emphasize the co-constitution of revolutions and international relations (e.g. Armstrong, 1993). Yet, even here, revolutions are seen as temporary anomalies, that is, mere exogenous shocks that can produce dramatic changes in intentions, yet eventually are subject to international pressures that usually force revolutionary states to quickly conform to established norms. From this perspective, then, revolutions hardly seem a topic in their own right for IR and, by implication, there is, for the most part, little need, let alone willingness, to historicize and theorize how revolutions transform the social content and speed of international relations and *vice versa*.

In this respect, the late Fred Halliday's work, which provided the first and one of the most sophisticated analyses of revolutions from an HSIR angle, stood out as an important advancement. Halliday (1999) not only recognized the mutually constitutive character of international relations and revolutionary situations, but also hinted at the need for a 'unified' social theory in order to better explain this co-constitutive relation. According to Halliday (2002), an 'international sociology' is necessary to theorize and historicize the reciprocity of revolutions and international relations. Until recently, however, Halliday's call for an 'international sociology' remained merely a fleeting reflection. Halliday himself planted the seed of a unified theory, yet never gave it a systematic treatment. Justin Rosenberg's reworking of the notion of 'uneven and combined development' (UCD) has

addressed precisely this gap in HSIR. Over the past decade, Rosenberg's endeavours, alongside other valuable contributions, have led to the formation of a transdisciplinary theoretical space that plumbs simultaneously the social dimension of the international and the international dimension of the social, hence heralding the *formal* birth of 'International Historical Sociology' (IHS) as a new subfield (Hobson et al., 2010; Rosenberg, 2006). In this newly emerging theoretical space, considerable effort has been made to apply UCD to probe the interrelated questions of revolution, international relations and modernity (Allinson and Anievas, 2010; Anievas, 2015; Green, 2012; Lacher, 2006; Matin, 2013; Morton, 2011; Shilliam, 2009; Teschke, 2003). UCD postulates a conception of the international that is diachronic and intrinsic to sociological processes themselves. Through UCD, IHS scholars have uncovered the changing social content and speed of international interactivity, thereby taking important steps towards overcoming 'unilinear' conceptions of revolutionary modern transformations.

Thus, historicizing the international via 'revolutions' (and vice versa) has been at the forefront of historical sociological approaches to IR. In this article, I re-evaluate the extent to which IHS has overcome unilinear conceptions of the transition to modernity<sup>1</sup> through a critical engagement with the international historical sociological analysis of 'bourgeois revolutions'. I begin by drawing attention to a methodological fault line within the IHS literature on bourgeois revolutions, that is, the issue of 'consequentialism' that divides IHS roughly into two opposing camps. Consequentialists argue that it is (long-term) outcomes, not agents or causes, that identify a revolution's socio-economic character. From this angle, revolutions are 'bourgeois' as long as they launch a long-term process of removing 'obstacles' to the development of capitalism. I argue that the consequentialist readings of revolutions tend to freeze the social content and meaning of revolutionary processes with an overdose of a priori logic of capitalist development. Consequentialists focus exclusively on revolutions' (long-term) consequences associated with capitalism; as such, they tend to overlook that even 'bourgeois' revolutionary processes might lead to an amalgamation of conflicting interests, intentions and principles, which, in turn, may generate contradictory results for the development of capitalism. In consequentialist accounts, as a result, social and geopolitical complexities, uncertainties and non-capitalist alternatives that might arise during revolutionary processes get lost in an all-absorbing and pre-given conception of capitalism. In the second section, I argue that non-consequentialist approaches to modern revolutions analyse with greater precision the spatio-temporally interactive emergence and diverging outcomes of modern revolutions. Critical to my discussion is: (1) the Political Marxist conception of capitalism; and (2) Robbie Shilliam's interpretation of French Jacobinism as a 'substitute' revolutionary route to modernity, which generated novel social forms in competition with, yet not as a derivation of, capitalism. Recognizing the historical specificity of Jacobinism as a non-capitalist path will not only provide a valuable entry point into the radical heterogeneity of the so-called 'bourgeois revolutions' in the West, but also, as I will show in the third to fifth sections, have paradigmatic implications for a rereading of 'arguably the greatest turning point in the modern history of the Middle East', that is, the Turkish Revolution and its early Republican offshoot in Turkey (Halliday, 2005: 7). In short, this article utilizes Jacobinism as a corrective to the one-dimensional narratives of revolutionary transitions to modernity. It explores how Jacobinism, alongside capitalism,

transformed the character and dynamics of the modern international system, and, by doing so, it critically reconsiders and reinterprets the theoretical significance of Jacobinism for a rereading of the mutually constitutive relation between modern revolutions and international relations.

### **From ‘bourgeois revolution’ to ‘uneven and combined development’: Historical sociology, the ‘international’ and the issue of ‘consequentialism’**

A long way has been travelled since ‘revisionist’ historiography rendered indefensible the old interpretations of bourgeois revolution (e.g. Cobban, 1964; Russell, 1973). For a long time, Marxists and non-Marxists alike tended to associate the revolutions of the West with the ‘rise’ of bourgeois classes. According to these narratives, the revolutionary modern transformations in the West were carried out under the aegis of ‘strong’ bourgeois classes whose leadership during the revolutionary processes facilitated the full development of capitalist social relations, as well as the liberal political-cultural transformation characteristic of ‘Western’ modernity. After the revisionist turn, however, even the most paradigmatic cases of bourgeois revolution — France and England — lost their paradigmatic status. That is, revisionist historiography has shown that even in the ‘classical’ cases of revolutionary transformation, the ‘bourgeoisie’ was not as ‘capitalist’ and ‘democratic’ as traditionally assumed and capitalist development massively deviated from what was previously held to be the norm. The weight of historical evidence has made it imperative not only to question the image of an ascendant and democratic bourgeoisie ousting from power a class of feudal nobility, but also to rethink the often taken-for-granted relation between modern revolutions and capitalism (e.g. Comminel, 1987; Davidson, 2012; Eley and Blackbourn, 1984). Furthermore, given that these ‘classical’ cases of ‘bourgeois’ revolutions have long served as templates by which subsequent paths to modernity are compared, questioning their relevance has generated important implications for a re-historicization of world historical development, both in the West and non-West.

In the field of historical sociology, the most notable result of the deflation of the significance of revolutionary ‘bourgeoisie’ in the transition to capitalist modernity was the bringing of the state (and geopolitics) into the study of revolutions. For example, Theda Skocpol’s (1979) *States and Social Revolutions*, which is already a classic in the field, sought to fill precisely this (geo)political lacuna. In her analysis of the French Revolution, Skocpol considerably modified the idea of ‘bourgeois revolution’ by emphasizing the catalytic impact of (geo)political relations in bringing about the revolution and complicating its capitalist character. Skocpol’s argument is that in pre-revolutionary France, distributional tensions between the aristocracy and the monarchy, aggravated by geopolitical defeats and challenges, caused the diminishing of ruling-class authority in the countryside, which, in turn, opened up a massive room of manoeuvre for peasant mobilization. Given the pivotal role played by the peasantry, combined with the threat of counter-revolution from ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, the French Revolution, ‘by virtue of both its outcomes and processes ... was as much or more a bureaucratic-military, mass-incorporating and

state-strengthening revolution as it was (in any sense) a bourgeois revolution' (Skocpol, 1979: 179). On the one hand, the revolution can be considered 'capitalist' in the broad sense that it consolidated private property rights and destroyed regional, corporate and guild barriers to the formation of a unified national market. On the other hand, however, the popular and military pressures generated even 'more striking and far-reaching transformations in the French state and national polity', which cannot be explained straightforwardly by capitalist class interests (Skocpol, 1979: 179).

I will return shortly to the significance of this 'dual' character of the Revolution for world historical development. Yet, at this juncture, it is important to ascertain in what methodological and historical respects IHS has converged with and advanced Skocpol's attempt to reinterpret the nature of bourgeois revolutions. In terms of method, Skocpol's historical sociology shares, at least to some extent, IHS's 'internationalist' concerns. Skocpol explicitly defies the internalist conceptions of social change (e.g. 'development' explained by the increasing division of labour, the 'rise' of the bourgeoisie, etc.). She argues that revolutionary conflicts and the associated modernization processes, both in and outside the West, have been, from the very outset, 'powerfully shaped and limited by' existing international conditions (Skocpol, 1979: 18–20). Despite this, however, IHS scholars have found Skocpol's analysis wanting in one important methodological respect. Skocpol, like other historical sociologists, 'powerfully acknowledges the international', but leaves it 'analytically unpenetrated', that is, 'the interpolation of the international takes the form of a proto-Realist *deus ex machina* that leaves "the international" itself untheorized in sociological terms' (Rosenberg, 2006: 310; 2008: 85). Skocpol's 'international' does not sufficiently register the socio-temporally changing texture of international interactivity; as a result, it tends to repress the historically accumulating consequences of inter-societal coexistence and competition (Matin, 2013: 8; Shilliam, 2009: 31). As such, Skocpol does not take us far in understanding the constitutive impact of revolutions on the international, and vice versa.

As an alternative, IHS scholars have invoked the concept of UCD. UCD is predicated on the idea that inter-societal 'unevenness', which is inherent in the condition of societal multiplicity, leads to a continuous process of inter-societal 'combination'. That is, under geopolitical duress, a society adopts and adapts other societies' political, institutional and intellectual resources, thereby combining 'domestic' and 'foreign' forms of life in new spatial and temporal conditions. This leads to the transformation of the initial conditions of unevenness as well as the creation of new 'combined' forms. UCD is thus 'the conceptual ... expression of the ontological condition that [societies'] interactive coexistence is constitutive of their individual existence and vice versa' (Matin, 2013: 16–17). What follows from this brief exposition is that UCD, by definition, entails a sociologically changing and temporally dynamic understanding of international relations, thereby defying unilinear conceptions of world history. UCD departs from the internalist conceptions of social change and equips us with a dynamic and sociological IR theory, that is, a theory that not only better encapsulates the changing social content and tempo of international interactivity, but also accepts social multiplicity and heterogeneity, as well as historical specificity, as its ontological premises. The overall implication is that through UCD, a socio-temporally sensitive conception of the 'international' enters the ontology of (bourgeois) revolutions, which, in turn, logically and historically,

undermines unilinear conceptions of modernity (Anievas, 2015: 845). In other words, UCD postulates a cumulatively changing international system, hence capable of capturing the socio-temporally conditioned origins and differentiated outcomes of modern revolutionary transformations.

Theoretically innovative as it may be, it is surprising to note that UCD, once operationalized, has given birth to two radically different modes of explanation and competing historical narratives of bourgeois revolutions. The bone of contention is the issue of 'consequentialism' (e.g. Anievas, 2015; cf. Matin, 2013). Proponents of consequentialism have sought to move beyond the problem of a lack of capitalist agency that troubled the old Marxist conception of bourgeois revolution by: (1) bringing (geo)political relations into the making of bourgeois revolutions; and (2) focusing on the consequences of, rather than the intentions or composition of the agents involved in, revolutions. According to 'consequentialists', it is, in fact, futile to look for the involvement of a capitalist bourgeoisie in order to identify 'bourgeois revolutions', for the bourgeoisie's rise to power, both in and outside the West, was complicated by the uneven and combined development of capitalist social relations. That is, the spatially 'uneven' development of capitalist social relations generated geopolitical pressures on 'backward' ruling classes, forcing them to initiate or precipitate capitalist transformation in their own societies. Geopolitics, not the bourgeoisie, was thus the driving force behind 'bourgeois revolutions'. Old social forms were combined with new ones under geopolitical duress, which marked the inherently contradictory and internationally driven character of capitalist development. From this perspective, then, the ideal-typical models of bourgeois revolution are, by definition, misleading (Davidson, 2012: 508–509). The implication is that the concept of bourgeois revolutions, both in and outside the West, should be disassociated from the necessary introduction of liberal-democratic forms of governance and thought independently of the role that may be played by a capitalist bourgeoisie. Accordingly, bourgeois revolutions should be conceptualized more flexibly, judged only according to their long-term developmental outcomes, that is, according to the degree to which they fostered 'a distinctly capitalist form of state' and 'an autonomous center of capitalist accumulation' (Anievas, 2015: 845; Morton, 2011: 46).

What is signalled here is that UCD, in general, has a potential to dismantle stylized assumptions about Western European modernity. Yet, it is equally important to note that UCD underlined by consequentialism also tends to obscure the heterogeneity of social forms generated by 'bourgeois revolutions', for the so-called 'bourgeois revolutions', however imperfectly and belatedly, from below and otherwise, are construed as leading to capitalism from the very outset. What bourgeois revolutions facilitated, then, was nothing but 'capital insert[ing] itself into ... an uneven developmental process, gradually gaining mastery over it' (Allinson and Anievas, 2010: 473), or 'assimilations to modernity' through 'processes of primitive accumulation' (Morton, 2007: 607). Put differently, based on the social amalgamations produced by bourgeois revolutions, capitalism 'united the world into a single causally-integrated, but internally-differentiated, ontological whole' (Allinson and Anievas, 2010: 473).

What gets lost in this 'grand narrative' of the rise of capitalism is precisely the 'dual', liminal and combined character of modern revolutions, for UCD, propelled by a consequentialist mode of explanation, allows social agents to act only in the shadow of a

(distant) capitalist future (Matin, 2013: 48–49; Teschke, 2005: 5–6). As such, UCD, despite duly emphasizing the significance of inter-societal relations in bringing about and complicating the outcome of revolutions, fails to ‘rescue revolutions “from the immense condescension of posterity”’ (E.P. Thompson, quoted in Halliday, 1999: xiii). The cost of this failure is high. For example, in the case of France, the ‘dual’ character of the French Revolution immediately disappears in a picture of slowly and belatedly emerging capitalism. This causes undoubtedly one of the most radical and innovative periods in French history, that is, ‘the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution’, to be reduced to a form of ‘proto-capitalism’ (Rosenberg, 2007: 478). Surely, to make such an argument, one does not have to go as far as some proponents of Political Marxism who totally deny the relevance of the French Revolution for the development of capitalism (e.g. Comminel, 1987) (more on this later). Yet, what needs to be acknowledged is that, as Skocpol points out, independent of some of the (long-term) socio-economic outcomes of the French Revolution, it is certain that the Revolution also gave birth to novel social forms that had contradictory implications for the development of capitalism, that is, forms that were absent in capitalist Britain and cannot be easily explained by the dictation of any capitalist rationality, such as the consolidation of small peasant-ownership, universal conscription, universal citizenship and equality, universal education, and popular conceptions of the ‘nation’. Consequentialism, therefore, tends to obscure the fact that even in Western Europe, different social forms were created under geopolitical duress, which attempted to ‘substitute’ (at least for a while) capitalist modernity with non-capitalist (and non-socialist) forms of rule and appropriation (Matin, 2013; Shilliam, 2009: ch. 2).

## Political Marxism and the UCD of Jacobinism

‘Alterity’ is thus subordinated to ‘posterity’ in consequentialist accounts. That said, however, UCD, freed from consequentialism, can still illuminate a great deal of the interconnectedness and heterogeneity of world historical development. In other words, UCD can account for the diachronic, mutually conditioning and ‘combined’ processes of revolutionary transformation if the consequentialism of its proponents is checked and rehabilitated. Critical to the non-consequentialist reinterpretation of UCD is a conception of capitalism that resists the transhistoricization and *everything-ization* of the dynamic and logic of capitalism. In this respect, we may allow Political Marxists to carry some water for us. According to Political Marxism (PM), the transition to capitalism cannot be explained through the mere existence of commerce, wage labour or private property because: (1) all these phenomena can be dated back to ancient societies; (2) they are far too general, telling us little about the ‘relational’ content and societal context of productive activity; and (3) a mere emphasis on wage labour tends to locate non-waged work outside capitalism. This is not to deny that capitalism increases the volume of production and the size of a commodifiable workforce by dispossessing the producers from their means of production. Yet, from a Political Marxist angle, taking these as necessary and transhistorical indicators of the beginning of capitalism would not only collapse capitalism’s consequences into its causes, but also obscure the fact that under certain socio-legal circumstances, non-wage forms (such as commodity production based on

non-waged family labour) can and have permitted ‘a more or less direct transition to capitalism’ without widespread dispossession of the workforce (Brenner, 1977: 52; Wood, 2002a: 176–177).

All this, in turn, relates to Brenner’s warning that there can be no ‘transhistorical laws’ governing the path to capitalism. The transitions to capitalism did not follow a universal pattern precisely because of the constantly changing inter-societal context of capitalist transformation, as well as variations in social reactions to capitalism from ‘below’, for ‘once breakthroughs to ongoing capitalist economic development took place in various regions these irrevocably transformed the conditions and the character of the analogous processes, which were to occur subsequently elsewhere’ (Brenner, 1985: 322). In this perspective, the transition to capitalism is best understood in terms of socially and temporally varying ways of organizing human relations and institutions that produce the historically specific impact of ‘market dependence’ (Wood, 2002b). In other words, the transitions to capitalism are internationally conditioned and spatio-temporally differentiated, yet all transitions, in principle, presuppose a *systematic political intervention* into the conditions of access to land and the elimination of non-market survival strategies. Thus understood, what makes possible the ‘fiction’ of ‘self-regulating’ markets is not the occasional sale of surplus product and labour, but the transition to a socio-legal order that is subsumed to the operation of market imperatives or the ‘law of value’, i.e. a form of socio-political organization that systematically enables and compels producers and employers to increase the ‘ratio of unpaid labor to paid’ and reduce the ‘socially necessary labor time’ involved in appropriating ‘surplus value’ (Post, 2013).

By departing from the evolutionist conception of capitalism, PM has a potential to develop a conception of the ‘international’ that is congruent with a non-consequentialist reading of modern revolutions. PM’s non-consequentialism is driven by a method that rejects seeing the ‘bourgeois’ class as the universal and transhistorical carrier of capitalist social relations. Relatedly, the old model of ‘bourgeois revolutions’ is criticized by PM for subscribing to an ahistorical method that views the ‘economic’ as a sphere driven by a transhistorical capitalist rationality. Instead, PM offers a ‘substantivist’ methodology (based on Marx’s later works) that turns to ‘real historical time’ in order to understand a society’s particular ‘logic of process’, its own rules of reproduction and its own conditions of the transition to capitalism. The implication is that by freeing the revolutions of modernity from the presuppositions of contemporary social life, PM cuts the necessary link between the so-called ‘bourgeois revolutions’ and capitalist development. This is precisely why PM has raised serious concerns about the relevance of the concept of bourgeois revolution. Some proponents of PM, for example, have gone so far as to categorically reject the validity of the concept (e.g. Comminel, 1987: 205). Others have argued that even if one does not have to drop the concept of bourgeois revolutions altogether (after all, it may still be reasonable to say that revolutions’ long-term and unintended effect could be to facilitate capitalism), radical agents, non-capitalist strategies and socio-economic alternatives that may arise during revolutionary processes should not be occluded by an all-embracing notion of capitalism (Post, 2011: 247–251; Wood, 2002a: 121).

Regardless of whether one chooses to retain or discard the concept of bourgeois revolutions, Political Marxists who work in the field of IR, while being equally sceptical of



the concept's transhistorical tendencies, are less concerned about the concept's fate, and more with developing an internationalist approach to modern revolutions in general. According to Benno Teschke (2005: 7), for example, the 'comparative' method, which marks the whole debate on bourgeois revolutions, is not an adequate strategy of concept formation, for comparative analysis of 'bourgeois revolutions' is predicated on 'the tacit background assumption of distinct and disconnected trajectories'. As a result, in comparative analysis, the 'international', even if empirically recognized, remains theoretically exterior and only contingent to the core explanation. This failure to systematically incorporate the international into historical analysis hinders our ability to come to terms with the fact that revolutions of modernity took place within the framework of 'uneven and combined development' (Teschke, 2005: 13). That is, revolutions occurred in a cumulatively changing and geopolitically mediated context; as a result, they impacted each other's timing and social content, entering each other's socio-temporal constitution. Therefore, the concept of (bourgeois) revolutions has to be thought in an analytical framework that recognizes the internationally conditioned and spatio-temporally changing conditions of modern transformations. At stake, in other words, is a historically dynamic and interactive conception of (bourgeois) revolutions that not only releases modern revolutions from the cage of capitalism, but also registers 'the nationally specific and diachronic, yet cumulatively connected and internationally mediated nature' of global modernity (Teschke, 2005: 13).

PM can thus provide a solid foundation for a non-consequentialist and internationalist reading of modern revolutions. That said, PM's relevance for the broader debate on the interactive emergence of alternative modernities has thus far remained limited, for PM has not sufficiently examined revolutionary processes that cannot be straightforwardly understood as capitalism. For example, PM's insistence that the French Revolution did not lead to capitalism does not take us far in understanding what the process of post-revolutionary French 'modernization' was actually about. This represents a considerable lacuna, not only because revolutionary France (regardless of the long-term and overall socio-economic outcome of the Revolution) generated historically specific forms of rationalization and mobilization alternative to capitalism, but also because the social forms created by the revolution became the model (alone or alongside capitalist England) for subsequent modernization projects within and outside Western Europe (Shilliam, 2009). As such, PM can give us a fuller picture of the 'generative' and 'liminal' character of the 'international' only if it moves beyond its traditional focus on the conditions of the transition to capitalism and engages with other non-consequentialist contributions to the IHS of bourgeois revolutions.

In this regard, Robbie Shilliam's non-consequentialist interpretation of French Jacobinism is an important contribution to attempts seeking to further dissect the question of inter-societal interconnection and heterogeneity generated by the so-called 'bourgeois revolutions'. According to Shilliam, the capitalist transformation of English agriculture during the early-modern period led to the generalization of the market as the main access to the means of life, thereby unburdening the peasantry from the communal rights/obligations that used to bind them to land. As property was separated from the wider networks of socio-political relations and turned into a 'value' in itself, property ownership *per se*, rather than a politically given communal duty, could be the basis of

social existence and was considered for a long time as the *only* criterion for citizenship, political equality and membership in the ‘nation’. By contrast, in revolutionary France, the revolutionary elite, partly guided by a historically accumulating sense of ‘backwardness’ in relation to Britain and partly due to the lower class energies unleashed by the Revolution, imported ‘modern’ rights in the relative absence of capitalist social relations (see also Matin, 2013: 52–54). In the absence of the relations of market society, wherein the ‘individual’ could be expected to deliver socially acceptable and fiscally/geopolitically beneficial results, the French elite linked the enjoyment of individuals’ right to property and equality to their service in the ‘citizen-army’.<sup>2</sup> By conditioning representation and social reproduction on compulsory military service, it not only substituted the logic of British participation in the public sphere — the propertied citizenship — but also led to the universalization and institutionalization of a set of new extra-market mechanisms of acquiring income and status. Service to the ‘nation’, rather than successful commodity production, gave access to the means of social reproduction and provided the ultimate form of civic participation. In other words, the condition of entrance to civil society and the modern economy was universalized and militarized in a way that reinforced the decommodified character of land and labour. Property and representation was extended to an army of peasant proprietors, that is, *citizen-soldiers*, with the condition of protecting the ‘nation’.

Shilliam aptly notes mass conscription as the hallmark of modern state-building in revolutionary France. However, he overlooks that mass conscription was not the only means that bolstered the revolutionary state. Despite periodic retreats from and popular reactions to it, the mobilizing vision of the Revolution was also pursued in the field of education. The revolutionary and post-revolutionary elites, while seeking to boost political unity and geopolitical competitiveness through a citizen-army, also attempted to integrate the common people into the state through a centralized system of free public education (Wolloch, 1993: 148–149). In addition to the invention of the citizen-army, therefore, ‘public schooling’ was envisioned as another extra-market mechanism to discipline and appropriate peasant bodies. The French elite, unable or unwilling to expropriate the peasants’ right to subsistence, attempted to centralize and universalize education (in a way unheard of in Britain until at least the latter 19th century) as an alternative mechanism to tap peasant labour and energies (Vaughan and Archer, 1971: 202–230). The world-historical implication is that universal education, in principle, brought to an end the systematic exclusion of the lower classes from the state (which was the main source of social reproduction in France, unlike in Britain). The need to mobilize popular classes for the state, in other words, brought in its train the generalization of access to it, which, over time, led to the emergence of a large ‘citizen-bureaucracy’.<sup>3</sup>

The overall implication is that the ‘mass conscription’ and ‘public school’ conditioned social mobility and social reproduction on the new subjects’ successful socialization and disciplining in a new military/educational complex (rather than on successful commodity production). In this respect, the combination of British and French social forms did not lead to a concentric extension of a more-or-less similar market project, but ‘set in motion a specific multi-linear character of modern world development’ (Shilliam, 2009: 21). The result of this amalgamation, that is, Jacobinism, not only instituted a set of new rules of social and geopolitical reproduction that fortified the decommodified character

of land and labour, but also provided a blueprint for other modernization projects. For one thing, if the citizen-soldier and citizen-officer marked a fundamental transformation in the contours of political life, their collective expression, the ‘citizen-army’ and ‘citizen-bureaucracy’, virtually unstoppable until 1815, demonstrated to the ancien regimes the geopolitical viability of an alternative mode of rationalization that ‘did not invoke the idiosyncrasies of British history as a prerequisite’ (Shilliam, 2009: 54). By revolutionizing the social basis of the army (and the school), rather than production, the Jacobin model of modernization ‘informed a new comparative standard against which other political authorities would be judged, and judge themselves, as “backward”’ (Shilliam, 2009: 55).

In summary, Shilliam’s analysis show us two things. First, Jacobinism did not emerge simply as the military and educational component of capitalism; rather, it entailed a regime of political-economy and property relations geopolitically related to, yet radically different from, capitalism. Thus, geopolitical pressures emanating (directly or indirectly) from the rise of (industrial) capitalism gave rise to an opposing political project more than a century before it brought about the rise of Bolshevism. Second, if the uneven and combined development of capitalism fundamentally marked the development of the political-economic landscape in Europe, so did the uneven and combined development of Jacobinism. Jacobinism, alongside capitalism, set in train novel social and geopolitical dynamics that deeply impacted the social content and developmental dynamics of the modern international order. Indeed, the economic and geopolitical challenges generated by capitalism and conscript armies compelled most European states to pursue a combined ‘capitalist–Jacobin project’. For example, Prussian elites, traumatized by their defeat by the Napoleonic armies (in 1806), set in train both projects concurrently: they took steps towards commodifying labour and land while invoking popular sovereignty by introducing the citizen-soldier as the new engine of the military machine. However, the long-term result of this mutually conditioning course of development in the Prussian/German context was the gradual subordination of the Jacobin forms to the emerging capitalist market (Shilliam, 2009). The question to be asked, therefore, is whether or not the early Republican modernization in Turkey boiled down to merely another form of capitalism. In the remainder of this article, I will seek to identify the precise nature and concrete outcome of the ‘combined’ character of the Turkish Revolution, which will, in turn, shed new light on the causal impact of the Turkish Revolution on the international relations of modernity in the Middle East.

## **The prelude to the Republic: The (geo)politics of sharecropping**

‘In terms of both historic impact and the laying down of an agenda’, argues Fred Halliday (2005:7), ‘the Turkish revolution of 1908–23 was the most important upheaval in modern Middle Eastern history’. For one thing, the Revolution sent geopolitical reverberations throughout Europe and the Middle East by setting off conflict in the Balkan Wars, which, in turn, led, ‘through the events in Sarajevo in June 1914, to World War I, then on to redrawing of the map of the modern Middle East in 1918–26’ (Halliday, 2005:7). Furthermore, the opportunities and contradictions rooted in the manner in which the

Turkish Revolution was carried out (e.g. the leading role of the armed forces in state building, nationalism, the modernization of education, secularism, the construction of a modern state in a multi-ethnic society and the emergence of private property as a constitutional right) prompted processes of inter-societal comparison and learning throughout the Middle East, which, in turn, left an enduring impact on the way in which subsequent Middle Eastern revolutions unfolded (Halliday, 2005: 7). Indeed, this is precisely wherein lies the importance of the Turkish Revolution for the debate on revolutions in IR: the Turkish Revolution not only changed the late Ottoman Empire and early Republican Turkey, but also launched or inspired the development of modern institutions in a wider regional context, decisively reshaping the international relations of modernity in the Middle East.

Given the world-historical significance of the Turkish Revolution, it is surprising that most of the theoretically informed analysis of the Turkish Revolution has thus far subscribed to the old conventional model of 'bourgeois revolution' in order to explain the specificity of the Turkish path to modernity. The argument is that the Turkish Revolution, due to the weakness of 'national' bourgeois classes, remained, by and large, as a 'bureaucratic' movement. This considerably compromised the revolutionary character of the Young Turk and early Republican era, thereby leaving it as an 'incomplete bourgeois revolution' in comparison to the 'classical path of the bourgeois revolution' characterized by France (e.g. Hanioglu, 2008: 148, 209; Keyder, 1987: 76).<sup>4</sup> Consequently, a form of 'state capitalism' and an authoritarian/statist modernization project prevailed under the rubric of Kemalism (Keyder, 1987: 105).

I will shortly depart from these now-outdated interpretations of the Turkish Revolution through the theoretical and historical pointers discussed earlier. Yet, in terms of my periodization of the Turkish Revolution, a note is in order. Halliday is certainly right in emphasizing the importance of the Young Turk seizure of the state and inauguration of the constitutional period in 1908 as the starting point for the Turkish Revolution. Yet, it is equally important to remember that the Young Turks, in the midst of an almost never-ending cycle of rebellion, war and imperial collapse (the annexation of Crete by Greece [1909–1911], Albanian rebellion and independence [1910–1912], the Italian invasion of Tripoli [1911], Balkan wars [1912–1913] and the First World War) hardly found the room of manoeuvre to actually carry out the revolution. Therefore, in this section, I will address the last decade of the Ottoman Empire only in order to make sense of the social and international forces that shaped the emergence of the primary heir of the 1908 Revolution, that is, the early Republican state in Turkey.

In the wake of the First World War, Turkey was overwhelmingly an agricultural society: only 0.2% of the population worked in manufacturing and 10% lived in urban centres. Moreover, the war brought about the emigration, deportation and annihilation of Ottoman minorities, which 'removed those responsible for 70 per cent of the capital and 75 per cent of the labour in Turkish industrial enterprises' (Arnold, 2012: 371). In the Anatolian countryside, according to one estimate, landownership was so concentrated that 87% of the rural population occupied only 35% of the cultivable land, and 8% were totally landless (Ahmad, 2002: 43). There is every reason to assume that after almost a decade of continuous war from the beginning of the First World War to the end of the War of Independence in 1922, the land question was even more alarming in the wake of

the establishment of the Republic (in 1923). Most of the land and property seized from the deported and exterminated non-Muslim Ottoman subjects was appropriated by Muslim landlords, which caused several land disputes between the landlord class and the incoming immigrant population (Tezel, 1986: 332–333). Tenancy was rare; the overwhelming majority of the land-hungry and landless population was heavily indebted to the landlord class, thus subject to relations of usury and involved in sharecropping<sup>5</sup> to be able to meet their subsistence needs (Silier, 1981: 15). ‘Middle farmers’, who were able to produce for their subsistence as well as for the market, were a ‘very thin’ strata of the rural population (Silier, 1981: 14). Farms employing wage labour were ‘extremely rare’ (Keyder, 1981: 13, 16). The overwhelming majority of commercial landowners were ‘absentee’ landlords, that is, landowners who left the organization of production to sharecroppers and were not interested in investing in land (Silier, 1981: 15–16).

Perhaps more disturbing than its economic consequences, sharecropping was seen by the Turkish elite as an acute political and geopolitical problem. For one thing, ‘[t]he role of land-hungry peasants in the Bolshevik Revolution’ was still ‘a fresh memory in the minds of many Turkish elites’ (Karaömerlioğlu, 2000: 124). Indeed, during the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922), the Bolsheviks had been involved in propaganda activities in Anatolia and exercised considerable influence over the socialist-leftist group within the first national assembly. Although the Kemalist elite managed to suppress the socialists in the Parliament after 1922, the elite perception of post-war politics and landlessness would be filtered through this wartime trauma of imminent socialism (Tunçay, 1991: 90). Equally important, the geopolitical situation during the post-war period made sharecropping look much more unstable and threatening than it actually was. The end of the war in 1922 had hardly brought to an end the international disputes over the new Turkish state. The fledgling Republic, unable to consolidate its borders and under threat by foreign irredentism, remained hard-pressed on the international front.<sup>6</sup> Most of the territorial claims and disagreements over the new Turkish state were to last up to the mid-1930s, only to be magnified later by the massive insecurities caused by the Second World War (Barlas, 1998: 123). The implication is that geopolitical complications before and following the birth of the Republic (in 1923) largely shaped the elite’s perception of the land question and of internal threats. The Republican cadres came to perceive landlessness and the relations of personal dependence underlying sharecropping arrangements as the ultimate hothouse for the development of alternate forms of sociality and loyalty, and hence the catalyst of domestic rebellion and foreign intervention (Tezel, 1986: 344).

All that said, however, almost paradoxically, the sharecropping landlord also constituted one of the main pillars of the political alliance on which the ruling Republican People’s Party (RPP) rested. While sharecropping stood out as the repository of politico-cultural forms and identities potentially endangering the state, the sharecropping landlords were one of the main constitutive elements of Republican power in the countryside. Therefore, directly implicated in the establishment and consolidation of the Republican regime was the constitution of a form of production that was insulated from the (geo)politically risky consequences of sharecropping yet not based on a redistributive land reform that could have prevented the underutilization of large landholdings and the fragmentation of smaller lands. Before turning to explain what this new form of production

really entailed, I first have to make clear what it did not. This is what I will discuss in the next section.

### **Industrialization, monopolization, peasantization (1923–1945): Kemalism as state capitalism?**

As indicated earlier, most scholars understand Turkish modernization as an ‘incomplete’ bourgeois revolution, which is then used to explain the prevalence of a form of ‘state capitalism’ in early Republican Turkey. In this respect, one may argue that Turkey was hardly an exception to the authoritarian regimes of interwar Europe: ‘state capitalism’ was precisely what Kemalism’s Western European counterparts carried out during the interwar period. Nazi restoration in Germany, for example, was not a ‘political freeze of or simple reaction’ to capitalism, but was underlined by the aim of ‘rationalizing’ capitalism. Against what it conceived to be a ‘wasteful’, ‘egoistic’ and ‘rentier’ capitalism, devoid of social harmony and subject to cycles of boom and bust, Nazism aimed to reorient economic life based on totalitarian ‘productivist’ ideologies (Maier, 1988: 12–15). Nazism imposed tariffs, established monopolies, regulated the movement of labour, suppressed unions and implemented the worst forms of racism, not to annihilate market relations, but to ‘rationalize’ them. Extra-economic measures were used to compel and induce producers and employers to ‘improve’ the technological and organizational set-up of the production process and deepen the commodification of labour. In the face of inflationary pressures, militant trade unions and geopolitical challenges, ‘the civic ideas of 1789’ were totally discarded in favour of a new social order based on authority, discipline and economic renovation (Maier, 1987: 77). Therefore, the important point to establish here is that notwithstanding substantial national differences, state capitalisms of the interwar period attempted to stabilize and improve capitalism, and, by doing so, they subordinated the Jacobin aspects of modernity to the capitalist project. The question to be answered, then, is whether Kemalist modernization can be subsumed under the rubric of state capitalism. How successful or willing was the early Republican regime in initiating and sustaining a capitalist restructuring of social relations and institutions?

Throughout the early Republican period, as I discussed earlier, two main (geo)political concerns marked the trajectory of Kemalist agrarian property relations. On the one hand, the fear of rebellion and geopolitical challenges forced the bureaucratic elite to stabilize the countryside and to prevent the expansion of sharecropping arrangements. On the other hand, the sharecropping landlord was one of the main pillars of the Republic, fundamental to the maintenance of the new regime in the countryside (Tezel, 1986: 343). Indeed, the Republic implemented an agrarian policy that reflected this seemingly contradictory amalgamation of interests. By enhancing the status of private property, the first Republican constitution (in 1924) facilitated the legal consolidation of large estates. Landlords therefore obtained full legal title over their lands. Yet, neither the constitution nor the new civil code (in 1926) took any measures to prevent the morcellization of land. Ottoman laws prescribing partible inheritance remained in full force and effect (Tezel, 1986: 340–341). More importantly, ‘the greatest difficulties were encountered in applying the rules relating to land’; consequently, arable land continued to be created and transferred without official registration (Versan, 1984: 250). This means that there was no political attempt to establish landlord/merchant monopoly over land. Marginal lands

of little or no cost were readily available (Keyder, 1981: 24). Viewed together, the Kemalist gambit in agriculture seems to have opened with two opposing moves. The regime attempted to maintain the minimum basis of peasant subsistence by permitting the expansion and division of small landholdings and, at the same time, officially recognized large sharecropping units, thereby forestalling a redistributive land reform.

Clearly, depending on the transformation of the larger context of social reproduction, the existence of small producers and sharecroppers may not constitute an obstacle to the development of capitalist social relations. Peasants may become market-dependent without losing their land (e.g. Post, 2011). In other words, peasants may turn into 'small commodity producers' on their own land, provided that their access to land depends on their ability to transform the conditions of production and respond to changes in commodity prices/relative profits. Yet, it is equally true that in a socio-legal context that drains the peasantry of most of their surpluses through usury and allowing the almost unrestricted division and expansion of land, neither the peasantry nor the sharecropping landlord would be willing or compelled to increasingly depend on the market and able to reorganize/improve production according to the dictates of market competition. In the absence of a transformation of social relations and institutions that would set free alternate sources of credit and food supply, sharecropping peasants would be *inherently* unwilling or unable to avoid subsistence farming, respond to fluctuating market conditions, transform the conditions of production and incapable of reinvesting in land.

How conducive to capitalism was the emerging agrarian structure? From 1923 to 1929, Turkish agriculture experienced exponential growth under conditions of an open economy (Keyder, 1981: 37). The state reduced agricultural taxes, distributed some state-owned lands to the landless and injected substantial loans into the agricultural sector with the hope that the small landholdings would increase production for the market and reduce their extreme dependence on the big landlords and usurers (Hershlag, 1968: 49). Under these circumstances, it seems safe to assume that the peasantry, unburdened by taxes and supported by the state, responded to favourable world market prices by increasing their level of production and surplus taken to the market. Yet, it would be a mistake to interpret the peasants' increased production for the market as necessarily leading to a 'qualitative' transformation of their relation to land and production (cf. Keyder, 1981). For one thing, the state's attempts at breaking the relations of usury bore no fruit in the countryside: land distribution was too limited to generate a qualitative impact on the peasantry (Tezel, 1986: 345) and the plots distributed to a limited number of cultivators were 'far less than was required to maintain a family' (Hershlag, 1975: 172). Likewise, most of the state-provided credit was used up by landholders with large holdings (Silier, 1981: 44–45), and even when the peasantry obtained some access to these funds, most of them had to use these monies to pay off a portion of their debts, instead of investing the money in equipment, fertilizer and irrigation (Hershlag, 1968: 113).

All in all, throughout the 1920s, partly driven by increases in population and partly thanks to the improvements in security and transportation, peasants extended and divided the area under cultivation, yet remained unable or unwilling to develop a capitalist logic of social reproduction (Hershlag, 1968: 112; Tezel, 1986: 340–341). Furthermore, given that there was no alternative source of labour supply and that the land was expandable and divisible by the peasantry, sharecropping landlords did not develop any systematic interest in supervising and improving the labour process on large estates (which would

otherwise help sharecroppers pay off their debts, thereby causing the landlord to lose their only source of labour supply). On average, 90–95% of the land within big estates was left uncultivated (Silier, 1981: 16) and sharecropping arrangements on big estates were governed by the same logic of reproduction that prevailed on small peasant holdings (Tekeli and Ilkin, 1988: 40, 89).

If anything, these socio-economic patterns deteriorated during the Great Depression. Anatolian peasants gave up product specialization, reverted to subsistence farming, fell into further debt and increasingly became sharecroppers (Akçetin, 2000: 93–98). Surely, in the eyes of the Republican elite, the prevailing destitution in the countryside once again resuscitated the ghost of rebellion (Emrence, 2000).<sup>7</sup> Worse still, the world economic crisis revived geopolitical tensions in the Balkans. The return of Italian and Bulgarian revisionism to the region with full force after 1929 heightened the perception of geopolitical threat, the fear of internal instability and the need for industrialization that had haunted the Turkish ruling elite since the 1920s (Barlas, 1998: 138–143). While forcing industrialization, the escalating inter-imperialist rivalry also enlarged the pool of external funds available for industrialization. The Soviet, British and German states, attempting to expand their zones of influence in the Balkans and Middle East, competitively extended low-interest credit and technical help to Turkey during the 1930s and early 1940s (Tezel, 1986: 430).

Turkish 'etatism' was born in this social and international context. What was meant by 'etatism' was never fully clear. On the one hand, by the end of the 1930s, the state emerged as an important, if not the leading, investor and producer in iron, steel, cement, utilities and mining. It nationalized all the previously built railroads, established state banks and investment agencies, and took back most of the state monopolies that had been run by private actors since the 1920s. On the other hand, however, all this hardly meant that 'the private sector was hurt by the expansion of the state sector' (Owen and Pamuk, 1999: 19). Although some distributional tensions inevitably existed between the two sides, protection of and incentives for private investment was generous during the etatist period. The state stimulated the growth of private manufacturing enterprise by establishing capital-goods industries, providing the industrial bourgeoisie with subsidized inputs and granting them greater exemptions from customs (Owen and Pamuk, 1999: 19). Much more importantly, the state simultaneously gave in to business demands for internal monopolies and external protection. Ever since the 1920s, 'infant' industrialists attempted to 'organize in cartels in order to prevent overproduction or in order to safeguard the high profit rates they enjoyed' (Keyder, 1987: 103). What changed with etatism is that the state began to deliberately encourage monopoly business practices. Etatism 'responded positively to [business] demands and permitted the formation of sector-based associations which openly sought to fix prices and avoid competition' (Keyder, 1987: 103).

As pointed out earlier, 'distorting' market prices through a variety of political measures and incentives was a key element of all 'state capitalisms'. From this perspective, one may argue that eliminating competition and granting privileges to the industrial sector in etatist Turkey was hardly an extraordinary measure. What is striking, however, is that while the Turkish state froze competition and secured profits for industrialists, it did nothing to increase permanent labour supply. The state took virtually no measure to close the land frontier and overturn laws of partible inheritance. Peasants could still clear the



land at little or no cost and, indeed, ‘the government aided this trend by actually distributing the land in small plots’ (Birtek and Keyder, 1975: 454). Furthermore, instead of systematically inducing the rise of a stratum of small commodity producers, which would have increased productivity and gradually released labour from agriculture, state support of agriculture seems to have aimed at the stabilization of the ‘peasantry’. For example, price and credit support programmes for major commercial crops remained very limited. They were far from changing the adverse terms of trade impacting the peasantry (Owen and Pamuk, 1999: 22), and were thereby incapable of reversing the peasantry’s structural inability/unwillingness to devote the majority of their labour time to commodity production and reorganizing their labour process according to the dictates of market competition. Likewise, state support did not amount to a structural transformation of the power of big landlords and commercial agents. The sharecropping landlord and big merchants made huge profits thanks to state credit and price support programmes (Silier, 1981: 88), which were, in turn, spent on luxury consumption, rather than invested in production (Tezel, 1986: 439). Furthermore, these production, investment and consumption patterns inherently inimical to capitalism were further solidified during the Second World War under the impact of military mobilization and the forced levy on agricultural produce (Keyder, 1983: 140).

Viewed in this light, it seems implausible to contend that the leitmotiv of the state support of agriculture was the creation of a rural capitalist class or the qualitative transformation of agrarian property relations. Instead, the safer argument would be that the state support of agriculture aimed to restore (however limitedly) the minimum conditions for the reproduction of peasant households by preventing seasonal price fluctuations and price speculations (Tekeli and Ilkin, 1988: 41), and, by doing so, it tried to promote political stability and production for industrialization without changing the essentially ‘peasant’ character of social reproduction. To create and sustain a peasantry that cultivates a minimum amount of land and is able to produce some surplus for industrialization was the ultimate goal of the etatist agrarian policy. The model countryside for the Kemalist elite was based on a mode of life far away from the tumultuous world of sharecropping relations and that certainly did not resemble the world of restless ‘small commodity producers’.<sup>8</sup>

In short, the development of capitalism in the Turkish countryside seemed neither feasible nor desirable. The flip side of this was the persistence of chronic labour shortages in industrial towns (Hershlag, 1968: 106). Despite the enactment of authoritarian labour regulations, ‘extremely high’ turnover rates consequently prevailed in both state and private factories: workers often quit their jobs simply because they could easily return if they chose, which rendered ineffective employers’ control over labour that could have been otherwise exercised through recruitment practices (Akgöz, 2012: 93–111). Relatedly, in a context where workers could easily exit and re-enter the labor market, the deskilling of labor and the scientific management of the labor process could backfire. Likewise, with easy access to political rents and no compulsion to compete, manufacturers’ social reproduction hardly depended on successful commodity production and extending/deepening their hold over scarce reserves of labor power (Tezel, 1986: 112). There was, therefore, no willingness or compulsion to supervise the labor process. ‘Workers were not fired even after they were fined for absenteeism at various times’, and

in many industrial plants there was no well-defined wage policy in place, no clear and accessible system of remuneration that would reward more productive workers and in some factories not even proper bookkeeping (Akgöz, 2012: 97, 104-5). Despite experiencing an industrial ‘boom’ based on massive import suppression, therefore, none of this led to a qualitative change in the character of industrial activity.

It must be clear by now that early Republican etatism did not entail the development of ‘state capitalism’. The state encouraged peasantization and monopolization as the foundation of a new industrialization strategy. The bureaucratic elite and industrial bourgeoisie allied to form a redistributive non-capitalist economy in which they themselves became the primary beneficiaries. Rural masses lived in destitution, yet the state, unable/unwilling to initiate a systematic transformation of the rules of accessing land, attempted to maintain their minimum basis of subsistence, and, by doing so, it defined social reproduction away from the market. The construction of a ‘market society’ was not central to the early Republican modernization project.<sup>9</sup> Instead, as I will briefly show in the next section, the Turkish ruling elite, from the very inception of the Republic, embarked on an alternative project of modernization. By linking the population’s social reproduction to their ‘schooling’ and ‘conscription’, the ruling bloc created an economy underlined by and adequate for the reproduction of Jacobin forms of exploitation and mobilization. Reconsidering the Turkish Revolution in this light will have two immediate implications for the debate on revolutions in IR. First, it will reveal (once more) the radical multilinearity of world historical development, thereby enabling us to depart from the one-dimensional narratives of the transition to modernity. Second, it will help us explore how (Turkish) Jacobinism, alone or alongside capitalism, reshaped the social content and tempo of international interactivity in the wider Middle Eastern context, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the international relations of revolutionary processes.

## **The army, the school and the ‘Terror’: The Turkish Revolution as a Turkish–Jacobin synthesis**

If the Republic was not the political expression of an ‘incomplete’ capitalist transformation, what makes the Turkish modernization a ‘revolution’ in the first place? What to make of Fred Halliday’s remarks on the world historical significance of the agenda, contradictions and questions posed by the Turkish Revolution? In other words, how can we explain the oft-cited ‘paradoxical’ character of the Turkish Revolution: its ‘ad-hoc secular-military absolutism’ and ‘futurist democratism’ (Dumont, 1984: 28); its ‘elitism’ and peasant-based ‘populism’ (Karaömerlioğlu, 2000: 116); and its repeated oscillation between universal and exclusionary notions of citizenship (Ince, 2012)?

I suggest that what makes the Turkish modernization a revolution and lent its ‘contradictory’ politico-cultural baggage was rooted in the UCD of Jacobinism on Turkish soil. The Kemalist elite took three critical Jacobin steps at the very outset of the Republican period: they introduced conscription, public education and universal suffrage<sup>10</sup> (in a two-tier election system) as the foundation of the rights and duties of all Republican subjects. The implication is that the early Republic embraced political equality and universal suffrage in an utterly non-capitalist society, that is, in a society wherein the state remained as the main and direct source of income and property. In such a context, wherein access

to state and property was, at least in principle, universalized among politically equal subjects, the Turkish elite had to continuously reinterpret the conditions of having property and being equal. The Republic's emphasis on compulsory 'public education' (article 87 of the 1924 Constitution) and 'universal conscription' (enacted through the Military Service Law of 1927) was particularly important in this respect, for while the Turkish elite were unable or unwilling to initiate an organized attack on peasants' customary rights on land, they could link the enjoyment of these rights to peasants' protection of the 'fatherland' and their disciplining through a centralized system of education. Put differently, given the social and geopolitical turmoil, improving the state without 'capitalism' arose as the most urgent task, which the Republican regime tried to deliver by linking the peasants' access to land to their acquisition of skills and allegiance conducive to the social and geopolitical reproduction of the ruling elite. As such, political and geopolitical utility for the state, instead of market competition, provided the subject with access to property, means of subsistence and civic status. Conscription and public education would consequently be set as the most legitimate criteria to determine one's eligibility to participate in the political community and to have access to the means of subsistence and property.<sup>11</sup>

Without structural change in the rules of accessing land, using education and conscription as a way to facilitate modernity was a double-edge sword, however. On the one hand, both measures had to resort to a somewhat egalitarian and populist understanding of political community in order to broaden the mass base and increase the geopolitical competitiveness of the Kemalist regime. Yet, the potential radicalization of 'equality' had to also be restrained by hierarchically requalifying the rules of participation in the Republican economy. This became an acute problem, especially in the face of the absorption of greater numbers of commoners into public education and the resultant glut in bureaucratic cadres (Hershlag, 1968: 68), for, theoretically, every citizen who was educated in the public school system and who proved his political allegiance by doing military service was entitled to become a participant in the political and economic establishment. Therefore, the rules of accessing the state, which was by far the main source and generator of income, had to be repeatedly conditioned to credentials other than citizenship and merit. Thus, the institutionalization of 'military service' and 'public education' as the ultimate means to acquire political and economic rights had direct implications for the economic structure and would inevitably lead to geopolitically informed 'exclusions' from the theoretically universalized political space, most notably, of Kurds and non-Muslims.

Significant steps had been taken to universalize conscription and compulsory public education before the Republic. The Ottoman ruling elite had to a large extent subjugated and co-opted provincial notables to the central administration, breaking their autonomous power over the local populace. However, non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, thanks to their links to foreign powers, successfully resisted universal conscription and retained their autonomous schools until 1914, which not only made them the usual victims of state violence, but also led to their marginalization in the emerging Republican order (Zurcher, 1999). Likewise, Kurdistan remained relatively unscratched in the face of Ottoman centralization attempts. In Kurdistan, political and religious power holders (often the same person), with relatively independent sources of income, remained in

power, and, relatedly, landlessness and sharecropping relations were more common in Kurdistan than in any other region (Keyder, 1981: 13, 19). Consequently, while relations of personal dependence prevailed and persisted in the region, centralist measures like public education and conscription never took root before the Republic. It is therefore no wonder that resistance to the Republican attempts at political and religious centralization was fierce in Kurdistan. Of 18 major revolts that broke out between 1924 and 1938, 17 took place in the Kurdish regions. Combined with new geopolitical fears related to the British and French presence in the Middle East, Kurdistan caused a continuous perception of imminent geopolitical threat and a 'civil war-like' situation during the interwar years, whose impact on the Republican psyche would, in many ways, be comparable to that of the War of Independence (Tunçay, 2010: 134–135). All this ultimately fed on itself through the interwar years, turning Kurdistan into the Republican powder keg, a constant target of the Kemalist 'Terror'.

Given the non-capitalist character of economic relations, the marginalization of non-Muslims and the (geo)political threats (real or perceived) posed by Kurds, it is not surprising that the Republican elite hierarchically redefined equality and civility by continuously reasserting 'ethnic' and 'secular' differences among 'equals'. While Turkishness, in principle, was defined by the Republican regime as a 'legal', 'civic' and 'voluntarist' citizenship category, in practice, it became a dual category that simultaneously encompassed 'real citizens' and 'potential citizens'; while the former represented the secular 'Turks' (whatever that might mean), the latter referred to the 'untrustworthy' non-Muslims and Kurds. Needless to say, only real citizens were able to obtain bureaucratic positions, while potential citizens were tacitly yet systematically excluded from the state service. Likewise, in the private sector, most companies were required to replace non-Muslim Turkish workers with 'Turks', and non-Muslim Turkish businessmen were subjected to crushingly discriminatory taxation practices (Bayir, 2013: 122–123). Yet, despite all this, it is equally important to note that the Republican elite did not categorically reject the non-Turkish subjects, but saw them as would-be-Turks. That is, while the Republican elite presented Turkishness as a unifying, secularizing and liberating force, they identified other ethno-religious groups with a sort of 'false consciousness', that is, people who forgot their Turkishness as a result of centuries of 'oppression' caused by the local religious authorities and imperial powers (Ince, 2012: 45–46). Comparatively speaking, then, unlike Nazism and fascism, which attempted to annihilate the 'man-the-citizen' in favour of the 'man-the-producer', Kemalism, at least in principle, continued to adhere to a universalist conception of citizenship. Why?

As argued earlier, Nazism resorted to authoritarianism and racial segregation to facilitate an 'organized capitalism'. In the new Turkish Republic, however, property was much less a right enjoyed by those who used property 'productively' and much more a privilege for those who (geo)politically served the 'nation'. Relatedly, since a capitalist space (wherein the right to 'improve' property overrides the right to equality) was socially and geopolitically unfeasible, Kemalism had to find new ways in which the right to property could be contained as well as reinforced. This is precisely why Kemalism, in contrast to Nazism, could still claim the sharing of (what they considered) the 'universal' values of 'civilization' while continuously reinterpreting the manner of their implementation in hierarchical ways. For example, certain early Republican

elites, willing to stabilize sharecropping relations, could go as far as to claim that peasants should be taught to gain and exercise their rights so that ‘nobody could insult and “exploit” them’ (I.H. Tonguç, quoted in Aytemur, 2007: 102). The spread of values such as ‘freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and equal rights which had been the well-known slogans of the French Revolution’ could be seen as essential to the elimination of differences that would otherwise undermine the social order (Aytemur, 2007: 105–106). Despite their essentially conservative agenda, the Republican elite, in the absence of a productivist space, had to engineer and contain a Jacobin citizenship ethic so that peasant labour and bodies could be expanded and tapped in ways to reproduce the Republican order.

Overall, then, the specificities of the Turkish Revolution were rooted in the uneven and combined development of Jacobinism on Turkish soil. The combined fear of rebellion and foreign invasion forced the new Turkish state to consolidate the Jacobin model at the expense of market society. Through an alliance with a non-capitalist industrial bourgeoisie, the state elite instituted education, turkification, secularization and the militarization of Republican subjects as the ultimate basis of their social reproduction. By effectively combining Jacobinism with the socio-intellectual resources of a Turkish–Islamic milieu, it set a new model of authoritarian modernization and popular mobilization that did not require the commodification of the means of life (at least for a while). As such, at a time when colonial powers sought to impose their rule in the Middle East, the Republican cadres set a relatively successful example of state-making, showing the feasibility of an alternative project of rationalization to the rest of the post-Ottoman (and Iranian) elites. The Turkish Revolution and the early Turkish Republic itself became a spatio-temporal force that extended the UCD of Jacobinism into the Middle East (an analysis of which is properly a task for a separate paper).

## Conclusion

IHS was born of an attempt to formulate a ‘unitary’ theory of sociology and IR. In this respect, IHS has claimed to make an ontological intervention into both disciplines, contributing to the formation of a ‘common denominator for research in both’ on the basis of an ‘ontologically plural conception of the social’ (Hobson et al., 2010: 4; Matin, 2013: 4). In this article, I have argued that for a truly ‘plural’ conception of so-called bourgeois revolutions, we need to avoid the epistemological trap of consequentialism. The consequentialist readings of history overburden the agents of revolutionary change with capitalism. As such, they tend to freeze the ambiguity, resistance and socio-political alternatives involved in a revolutionary moment. Consequentialism impairs international historical sociological imagination, obscuring the liminality and generative potential of the ‘international’ through an all-absorbing conception of capitalism. IHS, once freed from such retrospective and deterministic readings of revolutions, is able to reveal with more precision the spatially and temporally interactive character of world historical development and the multiplicity of modernities generated therein. In other words, analysing the so-called bourgeois revolutions without assuming capitalism from the very outset, that is, without flattening the non-capitalist alternatives that may arise during revolutionary processes, enables us to register more accurately the generative

relationship of differentially developed societies, and hence better capture the co-constitution of revolutions and international relations.

Indeed, through non-consequentialist lenses, the international relations of 'bourgeois revolutions' appear in a totally new light. I have argued that although the prior development of capitalism in Britain generated unprecedented fiscal/geopolitical pressures on the European continent for emulation, it also led to the outbreak of revolutionary ruptures that fostered qualitatively different conditions of being 'modern', that is, it generated 'substitutional' forms that advanced qualitatively different forms of rationalization, mobilization and appropriation as alternatives to market society. In particular, the 'substitutions' associated with Revolutionary/Napoleonic France were characterized by the innovation of one of the most radical ways of competing with capitalism, that is, the subjection of the peasantry to 'universal conscription' and 'public education', and the concomitant birth of the 'citizen-soldier' and 'citizen-officer', endowed with land and state-generated income. Furthermore, the geopolitical success of the Jacobin project (unstoppable until Waterloo) inspired other ancien regimes in and beyond Europe to selectively adopt, alone or alongside the capitalist project, the socio-institutional legacy of Jacobinism. For example, most Western European states, as in the case of Prussia, embarked on capitalism and Jacobinism concurrently, that is, they did not follow a more-or-less singular process of 'modernization', but initiated historically specific capitalist–Jacobin combined projects to increase their industrial, fiscal and military power. That said, however, in the course of the 19th century, capitalism, by and large, universalized itself in these countries, ultimately assimilating the historical legacy of Jacobinism into its systemic logic. Radical manifestations of popular/national rule were repressed and gradually incorporated into a constitutional framework of mass politics. By confining popular conceptions of nationhood and citizenship to a distinct 'political' sphere abstracted from the relations of exploitation and economic power, capitalism not only significantly watered down the Jacobin appeal of these concepts but also profoundly transformed them into antidotes for working-class radicalism and internationalism (Eley, 2002).

However, Jacobinism was not a passive road companion to capitalism. Capitalism and Jacobinism, promoting radically different forms of appropriation and sociality, existed in continuous friction in several societies for a long time. Furthermore, even if relatively brief and ultimately 'unsuccessful', Jacobinism, under certain spatio-temporal and international circumstances, served as a substitute for capitalism, and, by doing so, it 'coursed into existing struggles (from above and below) over the expansion of a capitalist world market and triggered further unexpected developments' (Shilliam, 2009: 201). As I have shown in the case of the Turkish Revolution, the original Kemalist experiment with modernity cannot be understood as a form of (state) capitalism, but rather as a historically specific Jacobinism that bypassed capitalism (and socialism) based on an alternative form of property and sociality. By conditioning social reproduction to military mobilization and education (rather than successful commodity production), the Turkish Revolution repeatedly recombined the Jacobin model with the social and intellectual resources of a Turkish–Islamic milieu. It generated social property relations and subjectivities that were consciously designed to achieve a Jacobin form of late development, whose demonstration effect had important implications for the quality and manner of the arrival of modernity in the Middle East. The Turkish Revolution thus became a vector

itself, constituted by and constitutive of the uneven and combined development of Jacobinism. Given its potential to illuminate the constitutive impact of Jacobinism on international processes (and vice versa), the case of the Turkish Revolution opens up the possibility of critically reconsidering and reconstructing the debate on revolutions in IR.

In short, Jacobinism has to be factored into IHS for a deeper understanding of the historical roots and legacies of the modern international system. Jacobinism, sometimes in competition and sometimes in collaboration with capitalism, put its stamp on the formation of the modern international order in and beyond Europe. A non-consequentialist reading of Jacobinism releases the so-called ‘bourgeois revolutions’ from the cage of capitalism, shedding new light on the content, tempo and multilinearity of world historical development. As such, it not only enables us to depart from one-dimensional narratives of the revolutionary transition to modernity, but also provides a valuable starting point for IHS to rethink the combined constitution of the modern international order.

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### **Notes**

1. In IHS, ‘modernity’ is usually used to refer to an interrelated bundle of historical innovations and transformations emblematic of the transition to the ‘modern’ world, such as the emergence of exclusive territoriality, citizenship, nationalism, private property and capitalism (Buzan and Lawson, 2014: 71; Matin, 2013: 22). In this article, I will use ‘modernity’ in a similar way, yet I will also try to concretize it by problematizing its relation to capitalism.
2. In contrast to France, Britain, with its capitalist economy and dispossessed ‘surplus’ population, could afford to ‘buy’ soldiers and improve its naval power without creating citizens. ‘More fundamental reforms were neither necessary nor desirable’ until 1914 (Mjøset and Van Holde, 2002: 34).
3. From 1792 to 1795, the bureaucracy expanded five times and doubled from 1795 to 1799 (Mooers, 1991: 73).
4. In contrast to the conventional conceptualization, Aykut Kansu (1997: 27–28) interprets the 1908 Revolution as a ‘full bourgeois revolution’ that attempted ‘to establish the political and economic supremacy of a new [bourgeois] class’. In my view, Kansu tends to subscribe to a consequentialist mode of explanation by uncritically equating the new bourgeois class with capitalism.
5. Sharecropping emerges especially in the context of landlessness. Landowners allow tenants to use the land in exchange for a share of the crops produced on their portion of land.
6. The new Turkish state and the Allied Powers could not come to an agreement on two main issues: the status of the oil-rich Mosul region in Southern Kurdistan; and the status of the Turkish Straits. Britain refused to give in to Turkish demands over Mosul, while all the Allied Powers refused to recognize full Turkish sovereignty over the Straits, demanding the Straits

- be demilitarized and governed by an international commission. The official disputes over the Straits and Mosul were (temporarily) concluded during the 1920s in favour of Britain and the Allies, thereby leaving Turkey unsatisfied with the status quo (Barlas, 1998: 121, 132–33).
7. The perception of instability and rebellion was so imminent that Mustafa Kemal had to order the creation of an opposition party in 1930 in order to stem off the rising discontent among the rural and urban poor. Yet, even this puppet opposition party gained so much power that Kemal would have to order the party's dissolution only three months after its establishment (Emrence, 2000).
  8. Tellingly, despite substantial increases in agricultural output, this was achieved not by an 'intensive' growth underlined by a qualitative transformation of the peasants' labour process and increasing dependence on the market, but thanks to an 'extensive' growth based on demographic growth and the increase of cultivated land (Tekeli and Ilkin, 1988: 40–41).
  9. All this brings up the question as to when the transition to capitalism began in Turkey. In my view, only after joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (in 1952) did Turkey find the (geo)political breathing space in which capitalist property relations could be established without the imminent threat of foreign intervention and domestic rebellion. Furthermore, US economic assistance and food aid, high world market prices, favourable credit policies, and the implementation of a stricter land registration system during the 1950s all contributed to the peasants gradually losing their ability to revert to subsistence production, their increasing specialization in cash crop production and their mass migration from the countryside to the towns. Chronic labour shortages, which haunted the earlier attempts at industrialization, thus began to be overcome with the continuous flow of a permanent labour force. As such, the 1950s witnessed the beginning of the transition to a capitalist order that systematically imposed and induced the market as the main access to the means of reproduction.
  10. Women's suffrage was enacted in 1930 at the municipal level and in 1934 at the parliamentary level.
  11. Besides (geo)political factors that compelled the Turkish state elite to substitute Jacobinism for capitalism, it is important to note that there was also a long-lasting French intellectual influence on the formation of the Ottoman/Turkish intelligentsia. For a discussion, see Özdalga (2005).

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