# STATE, INSTITUTIONS AND REFORM IN TURKEY AFTER JULY 15

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The failed coup of July 15 has shocked the current state apparatus in Turkey.[1] This shock has culminated in the public demand for administrative reform, which would make previous public designs and policy failures a matter of the past. There is large room to manoeuvre for reformist leaders seeking legitimacy and justification in order to adapt and implement a reform agenda for the foreseeable future in Turkey. On the side of the ruling party, a constitutional cure has been formulated, first, to ensure majoritarian control of all levers of the government, transcending the separation of powers; second, to sideline the bureaucratic resistance through remodelling it. Although the military and civilian bureaucracy have taken a severe hit in the course of the post-July 15 events and purges, the bureaucracy has also felt vindicated by the turn of events in that civilian political choices brought the state to the brink of collapse—hence, the quest for restoration of bureaucratic rule to restore state power.

The structural capacity deficit and lack of institutionalization are major problems for the Turkish state. The coup attempt and the massive purges in its aftermath brought the state to its breaking point. The state crisis has transpired in the middle of a political transition process whereby the ruling party has tried to justify change in the political system, from the parliamentary to a presidential system, in order to offset "bureaucratic tutelage" confronting the parliamentary majority's entitlement to rule. The constitutional amendments also imply changes in the administrative order, with further political hold on bureaucratic cadres. In light of such deficits and challenges, this paper discusses the ways, means, and prospects for capacity development and institution-building to overcome the state crisis in Turkey.

The reform and restructuring process entails cooperation and a level of understanding between the government, opposition, and bureaucracy. Polarization and disenfranchisement are recipes for further fragmentation in Turkish politics. Fighting to eliminate the bureaucracy either dilapidates state authority or engenders political instability if the bureaucracy proves astute enough to turn the crisis in its favour. Therefore, the current state crisis, further aggravated by the growing security and identity crises in Turkey, is a compelling factor that puts a wedge between the case for majoritarian decision-making and the ultimate goal of political transition. A cooperative model based on a working relationship between the government, opposition, and bureaucracy would facilitate a return to normalcy.

1 This paper is written as part of the Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project conducted by the Conflict Resolution and Mediation Stream of Istanbul Policy Center.

## INTRODUCTION

> ... lakin bir devletin böyle külliyen tebdil ve tecdid-i nizamatı müceddeden bir devletin teşkilinden güç olduğuna binaen ...
>
> ... since it is more difficult thus entirely to change and renovate the laws of a state than to found a state anew...
>
> Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, Tarih, VI, 6[2]

The failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016 resurfaced the state crisis in Turkey, which was the driving force behind modernization efforts dating back to the early 19th century. Turkish state modernization rested on an overarching motive to "salvage the state," which above all meant modernization of the army and maintenance of the diplomatic balance of power. The resultant Weberian road map largely empowered the military and diplomatic bureaucracy, which in turn became the flag-bearers of the modernization project. Absent organic links to society, the project failed to arrest the disintegration of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and thus shaped the course of top-down nation-building in the Republican era.

The modernization project failed to diffuse in the societal order, leaving the question of the integration of peripheral interests in the state structure. While the top-down state apparatus was largely left intact until the end of the Cold War—occasionally restored against anomalies through bureaucratic interventions in the political order—in its aftermath the growing identity crises of the Republican polity gave way to the integration of nationalist-conservative concerns in the state structure. In theory, this could have consolidated the state's power and strengthened the centre through the inclusion of the periphery. Yet in practice, it led to a continuous *kulturkampf* between the secular-modern centre and conservative-nationalist periphery.

The political will to reform set the stage for the bureaucratic centre's resistance to change and the conservative periphery's predicament in struggling against the bureaucratic Leviathan particularly after what was called the February 28 process. The end result of this process was loosening the bureaucratic cadres' grip of the centre, which amounted to the gradual erosion of bureaucratic power rather than a paradigm shift towards the empowerment of civil society. While the bureaucratic "modernization" process proved unsustainable, the vacuum was filled by the hegemonic role of the governing political party, i.e., the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), which first co-opted then sought to eliminate the bureaucratic resistance with a broad-based coalition of the Gülenists, moderate Kurds, and liberal-secular Turks. The Gülenists, with their predominance in bureaucratic cadres after replacing the military-secular cadres following the decisive 2010 constitutional referendum and subsequent large-scale purges, fought back to delegitimize the government both at home and abroad. In due course, the multiple failures in the management of the peace process between the state and the Kurds and the PKK's state-building ambitions in Syria and Iraq put Turkey back into the "security-first" outlook and undermined democratization efforts and relations with Western and regional countries. Simultaneously, the liberal minority, advocating EU integration through lobbying and intellectual power, lost touch with the AK Party's increasingly nationalist-conservative agenda.

Against this murky background, July 15 was an attempt to overthrow the elected government, dissolve the parliament, and control the state apparatus. The putschists, building on the parochial legacy of Turkish politics—i.e., the principle that whoever controls the state authority projects a hegemonic hold on Turkish society—tried to defy the growing odds against their teleological worldview. Now that the Gülenist project to impose a syncretic and largely ambiguous pro-Western Muslim identity on the Turkish state is over, the political arena is again ripe for transformation, which President Erdoğan and the AK Party are expected to lead.

The most important takeaway from the Gülenist disruption to Turkey's political transition was the state authority's proven inability to protect itself from penetration, manipulation, and misconduct. This was, in a way, the reason that the Gülenists were emboldened in their attempt to take over the state machine as a whole. Yet, they were unable to succeed due to vital resistance from nationalist-secular elements in the state

2 Cited in Carter Vaughn Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

apparatus and the conservative-nationalist electorate's diehard defense of the government's right to power.[3] As was evident in the coup attempt, the Gülenists had gained considerable power through positioning their disciples primarily within the judiciary, military, and police, among other agencies in the bureaucracy. The ambition, scope, and longevity of the Gülenists' four-decade project to dominate the state apparatus may look like an abnormal case—and to certain extent it is—but such a daring move to manipulate the state organs and the ability to further this goal without institutional checks point to the overall weakness and vulnerability of the Turkish state.

The structural capacity deficit and lack of institutionalization are major problems for the Turkish state. The coup attempt and the massive purges in its aftermath have brought the state to its breaking point. The state crisis has transpired in the middle of a political transition process whereby the ruling party has tried to justify change in the political system, from the parliamentary to a presidential system, in order to offset the "bureaucratic tutelage" confronting the parliamentary majority's entitlement to rule. The constitutional amendments also imply changes in the administrative order, with further political hold on bureaucratic cadres.

This paper discusses the ways, means, and prospects for capacity development and institution-building to overcome the state crisis in Turkey. What is the root cause of the problem of state crisis in Turkey? Does history tell us anything about the state crisis? What are the precedents of state reform in Turkey? What are the impediments for reforming administrative structure in Turkey? Would system change in Turkish politics facilitate such a reform? How does state crisis make sense in the bureaucracy and among the political elites? What is the relevance of democracy to the problem of capacity and institutions? This paper will seek answers to these questions in the following sections and conclude with policy advice.

3 Bülent Aras, "The People Who Stood Straight," *Wilson Center Viewpoints*, no.105 (2016), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/the_people_who_stood_straight.pdf

## STATE IN TURKEY

The recent literature on state capacity focuses on the ability of and performance in keeping the state apparatus harmonious, protecting stability, and managing the economy.[4] States are categorized as strong or weak depending on their abilities to deliver essential public goods, including security and welfare. This approach falls short of explaining the changing performance of the state in varying functions or in different times. In addition, it also does not say much about the reasons behind weak states. The literature also ignores the nuance between governance and state capacity.[5]

Turkey's state-building followed the path of modern state formation, with the priorities of provision of security, justice, and welfare to citizens. The Republican founding fathers pursued state-building efforts to render themselves as the undisputed authority within the new national borders and to obtain legitimacy vis-à-vis the international system. Their efforts were to some extent the continuation of earlier reform movements in the Ottoman era. Carter Findley points to the emergence of legal rationalism and modern sense of statehood against the traditional patrimonialism of the Ottoman system.[6] This worldview became a normative basis for government in the eyes of reformist cadres in the Imperial state. Metin Heper supports this idea and argues that this legal rationalism had been the widely shared perspective in an expanding and widening bureaucracy since World War I.[7]

Exemplifying the complexity of the discussion, the idea of state in Turkish history is almost identical to that of a capable state.[8] According to this understanding, the reason behind the dissolution of former states within the same geography has been the erosion of the state as a patrimonial provider (*Devlet Baba*, or father state). There were various motives for acquiring and protecting the strong state in former state formations. According to Osman Turan, the medieval Turks held an ideal of world domination intrinsic to their belief system perpetuated after Islamization, with the state acting as a defender of Islam in military and political terms.[9] Halil İnalcık explains the 600-year reign of the Ottoman Empire through the state's strict adherence to the ideal of justice.[10] In this line of thought, born out of the classical worldview of the Empire, the state was strong when it performed the ability to provide justice and followed principles of Islamic and Sultanic law to that end. In contrast, the Republican choice was to move down the path of political centralization and mark the state as the first and last resort of modernization and centralization, with a broader objective to establish political and social control. For the Republican elites, a strong state was measured by the success of the modernization project in all aspects of life, from education to institution-building, even if there had been disproportionate emphasis on security.

The centralized state structure placed itself above political and civilian spheres and considered state institutions and bureaucracy as its extended arms in transforming and modernizing society. This symbiotic model, which had early successes until the multi-party era, failed to adapt to the needs of democratic and popular rule. The result has been at best an uneasy coexistence of elected government and the selected cadres of military-civilian bureaucracy. This dichotomy, in turn, set the stage for the presence of a modern state structure with deficits of performance and implementation and incomplete democratic consolidation. The Turkish case of government-bureaucracy relationships not only fell short of Weberian legal-rationalistic ideals of ensuring stability and bestowing predictability to the regime but also undermined the popular quest for democratization through the self-assigned role of determining the contours of modernization. In any case, this sui generis role was utilized for social control and to intervene on behalf of protecting the regime's founding principles, above all secularism and nationalism. The Turkish state was also able to reform its structure in conformity with its foreign alignments, multipartism in the wake of World War II, and EU integration attempts after the Cold War to adjust governance capabilities to ensure popular and international legitimacy.

4 Johannes Lindvall and Jan Teorell, "State Capacity as Power: A Conceptual Framework," Working Paper Series, No. 1, Lund University, (2016), http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/publications/state-capacity-as-power-a-conceptual-framework(ca52e85b-f17e-401d-9414-c5f52ec860e9).html.

5 Ibid.

6 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire*.

7 Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington, England: The Eothen Press, 1985).

8 See, Metin Heper and E. Fuat Keyman, "Double-faced state: political patronage and the consolidation of democracy in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 259-277.

9 Osman Turan, "The Ideal of World Domination among the Medieval Turks," *Studia Islamica*, no. 4 (1955): 77-90.

10 Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk ve Adalet* (Istanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2000).

**Table 1. Varieties of Power and Rule in Turkey**[11]

| | Distribution of Power | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Narrow** | **Broad** |
| **Authoritarianism** | Coercive | Chaotic/Division |
| **Pluralism** | Patronage/Clientelistic | Democratic Consolidation |

The two qualities of this symbiotic model also gave rise to concurrent paradoxes of state power in Turkey. First is the lack of expertise and preparedness of the Turkish state vis-à-vis societal crises. The confusion of the ruling elite against social upheavals was one of the main reasons for an overall failure in conflict resolution in Turkey. This defect was epitomized not only in the broader Kurdish question but also in smaller-scale local, sectoral, and environmental conflicts. Second, the popular government's quest for legitimacy vis-à-vis the bureaucracy boosted the urgency of developmentalism and capacity building. However, even if developmentalism increased capacity and resulted in better performance and delivery of state services, the prioritization of capacity building over democratization unleashed social crises, which ultimately set the stage for restoration of bureaucratic hegemony within the government.

These two paradoxes would have been addressed through broad power distribution in an inclusive/plural political setting. The choice of narrow power distribution in the Turkish case is the result of the state elite's search for hegemony and dominance over society. The distaste for sharing power and authority is a result of the conservative belief in defending state authority as an exclusive prerogative of state agents, again born out of general distrust against society. There is a reason that sharing power ultimately brings chaos. However, such a situation occurs mostly under the straining imperatives of deep divisions and polarization in society, which are direct results of authoritarian rule. The ideal scenario for transforming the state into a service provider and instrument of good governance is to have broad power distribution in a plural political environment.[12] The absence of this condition in the Turkish case is one of the main reasons crises of the state reoccur, mainly as a result of an accumulated inability to perpetuate the clientelist and populist division of public goods generally under a rather strict distribution of power (See Table 1).

11 This power and rule matrix is inspired by the book, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012).

12 For a similar discussion see, Dan Slater and Sofia Fenner, "State Power And Staying Power: Infrastructural Mechanisms and Authoritarian Durability," *Journal of International Affairs* 65, no. 1 (2011): 15-29.

## UNFOLDING THE CRISIS AFTER JULY 15

The most recent state crisis in Turkey was built against this backdrop; yet, it also possessed peculiar elements that further complicated proper functioning of the state apparatus. In that sense, the 2002 election results symbolized the culmination of post-Cold War attempts to modernize the government-bureaucracy relationship, which went back to former presidents Özal and Demirel and later the coalition era in the 1990s. With an empowering electoral mandate, the AK Party felt obliged to orchestrate the long-awaited reform in the state apparatus. To that end, the government espoused a gradualist and indirect approach co-opting the EU process to neutralize the bureaucratic resistance to reform. The idea of Europeanization thus not only empowered the government to liberalize the administrative system but also brought a broad coalition of Islamists, liberals, and moderate Kurds together.

Between 2002 and 2004, Turkey experienced an intense process of harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* in order to proceed with its EU membership goal. The secular elements in the bureaucracy were won over, and even the military gave a nod to further the Atatürkist ideal of grasping contemporary civilization. The EU process proved to be a double-edged sword, whereby a practical package of state reform was introduced to bring transparency and accountability to the administrative system together with derogations compromising state sovereignty, which were both spoilers for the bureaucracy. Yet still, the EU process "established new mechanisms to make public administration more transparent, accountable and participatory."[13]

The ensuing controversy in Turkey was not about allegiance to the EU process but the disagreement on how far the bureaucratic establishment was willing to comply with the electoral mandate. The presidential elections in 2007, whereby the parliament was poised to elect Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül, turned into a major crisis. The military issued an ultimatum as Gül's family was seen unfit to represent the secular values of the Republic. There were massive demonstrations by secularists all over Turkey against the AK Party's choice and a great deal of concern that the Republic was under threat from Islamists taking over the presidency, especially after holding onto the Speaker of the parliament and the premiership, the top three positions in terms of state protocol.[14] The AK Party espoused a two-way response to overcome the crisis: first, to declare snap elections and, second, to co-opt the Gülenists to break bureaucratic resistance. The latter choice, as was proven by the later course of events, laid the groundwork for the broader political and institutional crisis in the state apparatus.

The Gülenists, who gained predominance in the top echelons of the state through a feeling of *esprit de corps*, utilized their growing bureaucratic, economic, and media power to delegitimize the secular stronghold in the state system. The AK Party appeared willing to yield to the Gülenist project as the party came to the brink of closure and political ban in 2008. After being declared the linchpin of anti-secular activities in Turkey, the AK Party could only avert the ban with a 5-4 Constitutional Court vote that still issued monetary punishment for such activities as a warning notice. Thus once more, legal and political disputes turned into existential conflicts that could have unravelled the political system. In a similar vein, the political decision to break the ranks of the military bureaucracy through dubious and mostly unsubstantiated court cases brought about the Gülenists' virtual takeover of the military, judiciary, and police.

The presumptuous division of labour in the aftermath of the 2010 constitutional referendum, whereby the AK Party held political power and the Gülenists acquired bureaucratic power, proved unsustainable. The latter had proven reckless in employing state authority to eliminate the strongholds of the secular bureaucracy and further eroded the Turkish state's institutional capacity. The scorched earth tactics of the Gülenists, who were declared a terrorist organization (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization, FETÖ) by the Turkish courts in 2014, unwound the uniformity of state authority. The Gülenist cadres in the bureaucracy followed a multi-pronged attempt to obtain monopoly of the state by cheating in entrance exams and interviews, interfering with appointments and promotions, and sidelining potential "rivals" through threat, intimidation, eavesdropping, and similarly dirty tactics. The July 15 failed coup attempt signified the Gülenists' last resort to turn the tables against

13 Süleyman Sözen, "New Public Administration in Turkey," in *Turkey's Democratization Process*, ed. Rodriguez et al. (Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 238.

14 Carol Migdalovitz, *Turkey's 2007 Elections: Crisis of Identity and Power* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2007).

the ongoing purges in the bureaucracy, which aimed to eliminate their disruptive attempt to neutralize governmental authority.

Today, Turkey is entering yet another phase of redefining the government-bureaucracy relationship. AK Party circles defend that a "strong presidency" would eradicate the tutelary power of the bureaucracy and pave the way for efficient and representative government. The proposed system, which will be put to referendum on April 16, 2017, implies presidential control of the bureaucracy, whereby the cadres in top echelons would be appointed every five years in accordance with the president's choice. It would also turn the Council of Ministers into a council of technocrats, responsible and accountable only to the president without parliamentary oversight. This shift would mark a paradigmatic turn of the public administration into a sui generis Turkish model. Two fundamental questions arise about the feasibility of this change: first, the basis of bureaucratic upbringing and, second, the bureaucracy's ethos and performance criteria. The modern bureaucracy in Turkey has been a product of Western education, and the Republican era opted for continuity by upholding that choice. In that sense, institutions such as *Harbiye* and *Mülkiye* maintained their status as the breeding grounds for the military and civilian bureaucracy, respectively. The AK Party government in its 15-year rule has been unable to establish similar institutions let alone a purposeful education policy.

An even more overarching question would be what are the defining ethos and performance criteria in the bureaucracy. In practice, partisanship has brought nothing but nepotism, favouritism, and clientelism in public administration, which had been partly offset by the institutional setup of the Republican era. To exemplify, the university and high school exams had been one of the most egalitarian outlets that enabled lower- and middle-class citizens to seek vertical mobility in Turkey. In fact, the AK Party and conservative elites are products of this egalitarian aspect of the Republic, which presented an option to balance against bureaucratic exclusivity—either in terms of social roots or ideology—in Republican institutions. If the bureaucratic ethos were to serve the governing party, this would entail ideological and institutional sophistication, which has been a failure of the AK Party in the recent period.[15] The most likely scenario ahead, if the referendum is accepted through popular vote, is a painful transition process, which would entail education and indoctrination of the new cadres from scratch with yet to be established institutions.

In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the political class and the bureaucracy have been alarmed over the destructive effects of the state crisis. The AK Party government, since its breaking away from the *Millî Görüş* line, has in the back of its mind the potential threat of the military-civilian bureaucracy intervening in the political process. The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), and cornerstones of the Republican regime such as the military, judiciary, and mainstream secular media have been pre-emptively accused of being complicit in case of such a rupture. In order to avert the sword of Damocles above its rule, the AK Party has sought an overall reform and promoted its case for transition to a presidential system. Therefore, this turn of events was construed as a vindication of the AK Party's projections. In the wake of the coup attempt, despite a semblance of being in control, the underlying motive behind the AK Party's will to transition against the ongoing upheaval was to have maximum political control in order to avert the recurring threat of losing power. While still assured about its electoral power, the AK Party leadership is aware of the possibility of non-electoral, i.e., tutelary, forces disrupting the political process. The constitutional cure is formulated, first, to ensure majoritarian control of all levers of the government, transcending the separation of powers; second, to sideline the bureaucratic resistance through remodelling it.

Although the military and civilian bureaucracy have taken a severe hit through the course of events and purges, the bureaucracy also felt vindicated by the turn of events in that civilian political choices brought the state to the brink of collapse—hence, the quest for restoration of bureaucratic rule to restore state power. The conservative elements in the bureaucracy have largely been either purged or sidelined, and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy are again filled by pre-2010 nationalist-secular elements that saw the July 15 purges as a second chance to resuscitate their right to power.[16] However, the debilitated bureaucracy lacks political and international support and, more importantly, lost the allegiance of traditional allies, namely the bourgeoisie and landowners. Therefore, a best-case scenario for the medium term is cohabitation during an inevitable process of transition to a new political order.

**15** Yalçın Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi* (Istanbul: Alfa, 2004).

**16** Interview with a bureaucrat in Ankara in correspondence with the author, December 21, 2016.

## INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

According to President Erdoğan, the need for greater state capacity is the reason behind the search for the change to the presidential system in Turkey. In a recent rally Erdoğan underlined the de facto transition to a new administrative system that entails legalization: "[W]hether one accepts it or not, Turkey's administrative system has changed. Now, what should be done is to update this *de facto* situation in the legal framework of the constitution."[17]

Looking from the perspective of bureaucrats, first, they should have their own motivations for providing public services independent of the political preferences of the ruling elite to some extent. Second, bureaucrats require partial autonomy from the elected government to provide policy advice as well as policy implementation; they also have incentives to contribute to cultivating public goods for citizens in order to safeguard the legitimacy of the state.[18] Although these two premises separate the government's will from that of the bureaucracy, and are likely to be the case in Turkey, civil servants in general seem to recognize the need for reform, capacity, and institution-building in the state apparatus.[19]

The triggering domestic and international factors mark a systemic shift toward a strong political system, which is necessary for Turkey according to President Erdoğan. In this sense, political principals play a crucial role, such as the AK Party had played, in determining the course and direction of reform. As Cortell and Peterson argue, political leaders "occupy and control the reins of government and thus possess the means to enforce their preferences."[20] Other actors, like bureaucracy and society, become influential in the reform process in relation to their proximity and the level of access to political rulers.

In the case of significant state reform, the mechanisms of the state's capacity would result in administrative capacity supplementing democratic consolidation or coercive power advancing autocracy.[21] According to Michael Mann, coercive power is the "range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups."[22] The state's capacity would appropriate an alternative preference to "penetrate civil society and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm."[23]

The shock of failed July 15 coup has culminated in the public demand for administrative reform, which would make previous public designs and policy failures a matter of the past. Lifetime bureaucrats may serve longer than their political superiors, and they would like to preserve their collective and individual interests as parts and makers of the state machine. This does not mean that bureaucrats may not have political positions and interact with the rulers for facilitating their services. However, Turkey's ruling party wants to keep bureaucracy at an arm's length and pursue reform goals through a systemic change from parliamentary to presidential rule.

There is large room to manoeuvre for reformist leaders to adapt and implement a reform agenda in Turkey. On the one hand, the reform in the bureaucracy is indeed projected as both the justification and the result of this search for systemic change as a political project. On the other, there is enough reason and motivation on the side of the bureaucracy to interact with the rulers in order to facilitate services and benefits for their own bureau in Turkey. Thus, the widespread agreement on the need for reform legitimizes institutional rearrangements. The challenge here is that institutional rearrangements can generate greater infrastructural power and/or secure loyalist political and economic interests. The proposed systemic change runs the risk of empowering the elected president to utilize changes in the institutional setting to consolidate his/her hold on power and eliminate and undermine existing political constellations towards a monopolistic political order.

The way in which the state's capacity was challenged plays a decisive role in shaping the mind-set of the ruling elite when developing policies in the post-July

17 "Erdoğan's Declaration of System Change Outrages Turkey's Opposition," *Hürriyet Daily News*, August 16, 2015, accessed February 20, 2017, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Erdoğans-declaration-of-system-change-outrages-turkeys-opposition-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=87036&NewsCatID=338.

18 Bruce E. Moon and William J. Dixon, "Politics, the State, and Basic Human Needs: A Cross-National Study," *American Journal of Political Science* 29, no. 4 (November 1985): 661-694.

19 Interview with a bureaucrat in Ankara in correspondence with the author, December 21, 2016.

20 Andrew P. Cortell and Susan Peterson, "Limiting the Unintended Consequences of Institutional Change," *Comparative Political Studies* 34, no. 7 (2001): 793.

21 Andersen et al., "State Capacity and Political Regime Stability," *Democratization* 21, no. 7 (2014): 1305.

22 Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology* 25, no. 2 (1984): 188.

23 Ibid.

15 era. Orçun Selçuk argues, "As Turkish state capacity is increasingly challenged by Kurdish separatists and Islamic extremists, the experiences of Venezuela and Ecuador are highly instructive, particularly with regard to their high rates of murder, political violence and the emergence of violent non-state actors."[24] A government MP underlines a different perspective: "competitive economic development, political stability, effective governance and fight in the multiple fronts against the terrorist groups requires greater state power. Though it may seem coercive that is what Turkey needs at this time."[25] The direction of the use of state power will depend on how relevant actors handle institutional rearrangement under the imperatives of state crisis after July 15.

The way in which projected systemic change would transform bureaucratic institutions is also not clear at the moment. However, there is an overall perspective on how public administration will take shape in the coming years. The projected time period for change and transformation is the period between the April 16, 2017 referendum and the 2019 presidential elections, provided the referendum receives majority support from the public.[26] The referendum is thus conceived as a mandate to implement bureaucratic reform. The top bureaucratic posts will be changed to managerial positions and filled by political appointees for the period of the elected presidency. This change in principle aims to fulfil the criteria of policy consistency and accountability in the administration. [27] The permanent bureaucracy or state establishment will consist of junior- and mid-level civil servants who will not be subject to reshuffling with a view to maintain an element of continuity in the public administration.

The harmony between political consistency and bureaucratic autonomy underlines an intrinsic dilemma between public administration and government in Turkey. Namely, the bureaucrat "is expected to be both independent and subservient, both responsible for its actions and subject to ministerial responsibility, both politicised and non-politicised at the same time."[28]

However, defeating bureaucratic tutelage through institutional reform will depend on bridging the gap between the ambitions of the government and capacity and willingness of the bureaucrats to appropriate new roles. There would likely be tension between the political appointees and other civil servants and possible adaptation problems for adjusting the roles towards a managerial public administration. The proponents of the presidential system defend that the electoral mandate and political appointments would allow top bureaucrats to better respond to the public demand of reform. Again, it would still render a certain degree of bureaucratic autonomy to the junior- and mid-level civil servants under the gaze of political polarization and clientelistic political culture in Turkey.

Bureaucratic reform will certainly aim to increase the state's capacity to deal with a variety of problems, ranging from separatist threats to the quality of education. Turkish politicians blame the bureaucratic cadres for failing to address a number of problems. That is why there is a continuous search for capacity development and a better functioning state system.[29] On the side of civil servants, rather than involvement at the micro and macro level of issues and problems, their bureaucratic socialization and bureau culture shapes the ethics and skills of the organization.[30] Both ethos and self-interests play an important role in shaping the bureaucratic functions of the office. In other words, although to an extent certain norms define a bureaucratic organization, salary, promotion, reputation, recognition, among others, determine what bureaucrats want and how they act in their bureau.[31] In this sense, the search for a performance- and delivery-oriented public administration would only make sense in the state apparatus if there were a modus vivendi between political and state elites, or the political elite develops a strong mandate against the latter.

**24** Selçuk Orçun, "Strong Presidents and Weak Institutions: Populism in Turkey, Venezuela and Ecuador," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 4 (2016): 571-589.

**25** Interview with a member of the Turkish parliament in Ankara in correspondence with the author, December 21, 2016.

**26** Interview with a member of the Turkish parliament in Ankara in correspondence with the author, December 21, 2016.

**27** Chief advisor to the president, Özlem Zengin, mentioned this in a TV interview: "Interview with Özlem Zengin," TRT Haber, February 15, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGSqpQy7T4o.

**28** Eva Etzioni-Halevy, *Bureaucracy and Democracy: A Political Dilemma* (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985): 87.

**29** "Memurluk Tapulu Mal Değil," *Sabah*, February 21, 2017.

**30** James Q Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1989).

**31** Judith Tendler, *Good Government in the Tropics* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997); Mangla Akshay, *Bureaucratic Norms and State Capacity: Implementing Primary Education in India's Himalayan Region* (Boston: Harvard Business School, 2014).

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The reform and restructuring process entails cooperation and a level of understanding between the government, opposition, and bureaucracy. Polarization and disenfranchisement are recipes for further fragmentation in Turkish politics. Fighting to eliminate the bureaucracy either dilapidates state authority or engenders political instability if the bureaucracy proves astute enough to turn the crisis in its favour. Therefore, the current state crisis, further aggravated by the growing security and identity crises in Turkey, is a compelling factor that puts a wedge between the case for majoritarian decision-making and the ultimate goal of political transition.

Bureaucratic reform and institution-building in Turkey is a matter of necessity considering the state crisis after July 15. The strong public demand for change and reform should not be made hostage to partisan considerations and bureaucratic power calculus. A cooperative model based on a working relationship between different pillars of political spectrum and public administration would facilitate a return to normalcy. The following policy advice may help to pursue a smooth but necessary reform agenda to address the state crisis in Turkey.

- The long history of patrimonial tradition and state domination is expected to resist reform and shift the Turkish state from an administrative state to a managerial state. The resistance of bureaucratic institutions to change would make transformation and reform a challenging task. A new institutional design thus needs to make sure that it does not reinforce the ideological state perspective and rather builds on a functional and delivering state as novel ethos of public administration.

- Reform in public administration requires substance and details aside from the public demand and political will to pursue reform goals. There is no one-size-fits-all formula, and each bureau has its own specifics. Functional peculiarities determine the change in the bureau, ranging from the degree of autonomy to structural design.

- The April 16th referendum will determine the course of reform. A compelling "yes" vote would surely empower the AK Party for reform. A "no" vote, however, will not erode the necessity for state reform. Either way, the government would have to recruit broader support beyond its electoral base to supplant what it sees as a "dysfunctional" administrative order.

- Beyond conceptual considerations, the public sector immediately needs human and material resources to compensate for the purges. This is both a chance and a hurdle before the will to reform.

- There should be substantial change in the recruitment of civil servants. The criteria for recruitment and promotion should be talent, expertise, merit, and to a degree, equal representation of subgroups in the society, above all women. The quality of public administration relies on the institutional ethos and professional quality of civil servants. Good governance might be seen as a cliché, but it still offers the best route for national reconciliation and institution-building in transitional countries.

- There is a thin line between government-bureaucracy relations for balancing autonomy, policy consistency, and political accountability. The defining quest should be to formulate a working relationship for efficient, accountable, and responsive public administration.-

- Capacity building entails, inter alia, education, training, and legitimate policy goals. The first two of these necessitate institutionalization, the latter democratic legitimacy. The process of transformation would be smoother in a plural and democratic political atmosphere, even if Turkey lacks experience in democratic transformation. Such a political atmosphere would also facilitate the ruling party's ambitious development agenda, since growth is more likely in a democratic setting.[32] Turkey should also utilize the possibilities for public-private partnership to avail the growing successes of the private sector in management.

- High-level bureaucrats may not turn easily into managers, and outside appointments may not easily fill the required positions. There needs to

32 Jonathan K. Hanson, "Democracy and State Capacity: Complements or Substitutes?" *Studies in Comparative International Development* 50, no. 3 (2015): 304–330.

be careful work toward picking ideal candidates as new civil servants are hired and promoted from among the bureaucracy and non-public officials. Given the current gap in human resources and unpreparedness for a decisive turn, cohabitation between political and bureaucratic cadres is the most feasible option.

- There is need for good working relations between the government and the bureaucracy in order to pursue reform goals. Administrative reform, institution-building, and capacity development requires at least some degree of will and participation from the different bureaus in the state apparatus. Selective bureaucratic affiliation with political principals would help but not ensure ultimate success. Again, the determinant of public policy success is defining objective performance criteria, normative order for hiring and firing, and setting benchmarks for policy implementation.
- Earlier attempts for state reform simply avoided engagement in public debate. Consultation with the public on the ways and means of civil service they would like to receive would enrich the reform process with feedback from this vital stakeholder. The involvement of civil society, interest groups, and societal actors in this process would democratize and legitimize the process.

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