

Atatürk and Contemporary Speech Lessons from the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Era

Altug Akin

In recent decades, discussions in Turkey regarding limitations on speech and the press have intensified, attracting widespread global attention. From frequent bans on online communication platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, to the seemingly arbitrary imprisonment of journalists with opposition views, regulation of speech during the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002 has been highly contentious. This chapter aims to put debate on these practices into an historical perspective, by focusing on the era of the foundation of modern Turkey, namely the late Ottoman and early Republican period, which stretched roughly between 1830 and 1945. It argues that it is in this period that significant fields of contemporary Turkey, such as politics, education, and the legal system, emerged, leaving an enduring legacy, in the context of which contemporary policies must be understood.

This earlier era is associated with one of the most significant political characters in Turkey's history, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), who played a momentous role in the transition from the Ottoman order to modern Turkey. In his single-minded efforts to realize his utopia, a modern, secular republic being part of the Western world, Atatürk brought about a drastic reshaping of Turkish society, and neither Turkey nor the Muslim world will ever be the same again (Hanioglu 2011, p. 232). Although Mustafa Kemal was evidently not the sole factor that made the transformation of Turkish society possible, he was a radical and authoritative figure who marked the process with his own stamp. It is therefore important to examine his approach to speech as a sociopolitical phenomenon and its regulation, in order to understand the foundational framework in which speech has been handled in the Turkish context. His stamp is central to a consideration of tendencies in speech and society in Turkey.

Accordingly, after summarizing Atatürk's views on the issue of speech, its role and regulation, this chapter presents the context of the late Ottoman and early Republican era that heralded his approach, in order to uncover his inspirations and their underlying dynamics.

*MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK'S THINKING ON SPEECH: ROLES,
MISSION, AND REGULATION OF THE PRESS*

Mustafa Kemal, an inspired leader rather than an academic, committed little to paper on the subject of speech, its social meaning or regulation. Nevertheless, some attempt can be made to piece together his thoughts on this issue – thoughts that were expressed at different times, in diverse contexts, but that might lead to a coherent philosophy. For example, one of Atatürk's speeches from 1924, barely five months after the Turkish Republic was established, illustrates the core of his thinking about speech and the press at the time:

I would like to reemphasize the great duty of the press in public life, political life and the progress of the Republic. There is no need to mention how delicate a situation it is to make good use of wide and absolute freedom of the press. Beyond all kinds of legal reservations, a man of letters should have the solemn obligation to regard and respect science, requirements of the day and his own political considerations as well as the rights of the citizens and the esteemed interests of the country, which are beyond all private considerations. And it is this obligation that may ensure public order. Even if there should be failures and faults on this path, the effective instruments to remedy these faults will not be as in olden days, certain institutions that take the press under control. Quite the contrary, the means of removing troubles, born out of the freedom of the press, shall be the freedom of the press itself.¹

This quotation, where Atatürk's philosophy about speech begins to crystallize, can be studied in three layers: the tasks, mission, and regulation of the press. The press, in this emerging theory, has significant *tasks* (regarding and respecting science, journalists' own political considerations, rights of citizens, and, most importantly, interests of the country) that serve the *mission* of "ensuring public order." Echoing this understanding that attaches public duties to the press, Atatürk had earlier stated that:

The press is the common voice of a nation. In the illumination and enlightenment of a nation, in furnishing a nation with the intellectual nourishment it needs, in short, in ensuring that the nation, the sole target of which is

¹ Atatürk's speech on March 1, 1924.

to achieve happiness, walks on a joint path, the press constitutes a force, a school, a guide for such nation.²

Similarly, in 1923 he emphasized the watchdog role of the press: “[j]ournalists should do necessary reporting when they witness and uncover actions against the law and interests of the public” (Arsan 1997b, p. 55). In 1924, highlighting the public tasks as opposed to private interest, Atatürk declared that “[t]he influence that newspapers with particular intentions may have on the majority of the people, just like in any other country, is not in favor of these papers” (Arsan 1997b, p. 110).

Due to these public tasks and the mission Atatürk identified for the press, he believed that it had to be *regulated*, though in ways dissimilar to regulation during the Ottoman era. On freedom of the press, he stated that the “[p]ress, for no reason, can be held under domination and influence” (Arsan 1997c, p. 88) and “[j]ournalists should write sincerely what they see, what they think, what they know” (“Bir aylık dünya şcu’umu” *Aylık* 1929, p. 4791). The press lacked such a notion in the Ottoman past; therefore, Atatürk claimed, regulation was necessary. Such regulation would be in accordance with the Republic’s principles represented by the Grand National Assembly and, as he asserted in 1925, when the principle of press freedom would not suffice to solve the troubles stemming from itself, use of other means would be justified:

If those fundamental principles, established within the guiding and mature understanding of the Grand Assembly, suggesting that troubles stemming from the freedom of the press may only be resolved by way of freedom of the press, enable those who are far from virtue, which is the spirit of the Republic, to act as plunderers within the press; if the ill-omened affects of the ideas of those deceptive and seductive individuals give rise to the death of innocent citizens, working on their farms or to the loss of their homes and finally if these deceptive individuals make recourse to the waste type of brigandage and find the opportunity to make use of special favors or laws, then it will be without doubt inevitable that the Grand National Assembly stretches out its taming and punishing arms, in order to interfere and warn ... Only the Republic can rear the press with the mentality and morality of the Republic. On one hand, the men and papers of the past era, which are impossible to be corrected, appear in the minds of the nation, while on the other hand, a clean and prosperous field of the Republican press is expanding and rising. It will be only the press in this mentality, which will facilitate and motivate our great and noble nation’s novel work and civil life.³

² Atatürk’s speech on March 1, 1922.

³ Atatürk’s speech on November 1, 1925.

These declarations represent, in a nutshell, a utilitarian understanding of speech that primarily serves the public interest and must be carefully regulated by “modern” means. In practice, throughout the two decades after the establishment of Turkish Republic in 1923, the regulation dimension of the press in particular, and speech in general, followed a course that demonstrated the complications behind this understanding of Mustafa Kemal. As it turned out, the political context of the Republic was far from being tolerant to voices and tendencies different from those of the official ideological position. For instance, shortly after Atatürk’s declaration mentioned above, “the means of removing troubles, born out of the freedom of the press, shall be the freedom of the press itself,” the infamous Law of Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun*) was promulgated in 1925, originally as a response to the first massive ethnic insurrection in the eastern provinces (Tunçay 1981, p. 27) with religious undertones. Almost all press and mass-communication channels outside of the official ideology were silenced, regardless of their conservative, liberal or progressive leanings (Gevgilili 1990, p. 125). A year after the order came into effect, Mustafa Kemal stated that “in the face of maltreatments and abuses, the law certainly did not condition freedom of opinion and of the press, aiming to preserve welfare and security, as well as defending and affirming the revolution vital for the nation.”⁴ Under press laws issued in 1931 and in place until 1945, newspapers were heavily controlled under a single-party regime, as were other forms of speech deemed threatening to the Republic.

SPEECH AND ITS REGULATION IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD (1830S–1923)

What was the context that made Atatürk’s thinking and practices about speech and its regulation possible? The Turkish modernist movement, which he epitomized, had its roots in pre-republican Turkish history going back, in a significant way, at least a century. Therefore, despite the radical changes that it brought about, the Turkish transformation led by Atatürk did not represent a sharp break from the Ottoman past but, in significant respects, its reformed continuation. The ideas he espoused, including those with regard to speech, press, and regulation, had been widely discussed in detail long before the republican reforms, and were in many ways not novelties originated by the founder of the Republic. Furthermore, the ideas embraced by Atatürk had flourished in the context of the dynamics of nineteenth-century Ottoman society, which was the period of grand transformation. As a response to the

⁴ Atatürk’s speech on November 1, 1926.

The introduction of print media, particularly newspapers as a modern and institutionalized form of speech, came to Ottoman society at a time when a new form of political power was being shaped in response to “the new demands of modernity” in many parts of the world (Kırlı 2009, p. 195). The Ottoman state’s response to this new political order, officially known as *Tanzimat*, took the form of a massive reform program in the legal, economic, and administrative spheres, initiated by Sultan Mahmud II (1789–1839) in 1839. Such extensive reforms of the state’s operations did transform the way speech as a social phenomenon was perceived and, accordingly, regulated. Surveillance by spying, for instance, began to be carried out in a more systematic way, by incorporating local people as “unofficial” spies and, most importantly, adopting a different rationale. Instead of subduing the populace by persecuting “seditious” words, the new purpose was to investigate public moods and opinions, which was the “discovery of the public opinion,” not to denounce it (Kırlı 2009, p. 185), but to govern or control it in a modern fashion. The launch of the newspaper by the Ottoman state was an attempt to influence newly discovered public opinion and its constituting component, speech.

“MODERNIZATION” OF SPEECH: PUBLIC OPINION AND NEWSPAPERS

In his efforts to further his reforms, Sultan Mahmud II saw the necessity of securing the support and cooperation of his people (Yalman 1914, p. 27) and one of the most important steps he took in this direction was the founding of the newspaper *Takvim-i Vekayi* (*The Calendar of Events*) in 1831, the first newspaper in the Turkish language published in Istanbul. The paper also emerged as a counterattack to rebellious Governor Mehmed Âli Pasha’s newspaper *Vekayi-i Misriye* (*Egyptian Affairs*) that had been established in 1828 in Egypt. Once the loyal governor of a lucrative Egyptian province, Mehmed Âli Pasha, rebelled and posed a substantial challenge to the Empire, *Takvim-i Vekayi* began to serve as a new front in the war between the sultan and his governor (Kırlı 2009, p. 189), precisely in the battle over public opinion. The leading article in the first issue, explaining the newspaper’s *raison d’être*, reveals that the purpose of the paper has much to do with this battle:

If daily events are not made public at the time of their occurrence, and their true nature is not disclosed, the people are apt to interpret governmental acts in ways that are not even dreamed of or imagined by the authors. Human nature is always inclined to attack or criticize everything, the character or truth of which it does not know. In order to check the attacks and

misunderstandings and to give people peace of mind, and satisfaction, it is necessary to make them acquainted with the real nature of the events. (Yalman 1914, p. 30)

The editorial clearly presents from the outset the Ottoman government's understanding of the newspaper as a tool to influence emerging public opinion, although public opinion (*efkâr-ı umûme*) as a concept did not emerge in Ottoman society before 1860. This conception of the first official newspaper's origins, from 1830s onwards, constituting the public and its opinion as a source of authority, were processes intimately linked with the changing "governmentality" (Foucault 1991; Dean 1999) of the Ottoman state, processes by which the population became the primary target to be acted upon (Kırlı 2009, p. 180). While "the public" and public opinion emerged as a legitimate force in the business of governance, this major transformation brought along the constitution of the people as political subjects, as well as the birth of institutional practices through which people raised their voices.

In this period, between roughly 1840 and 1860, "Ottoman print capitalism" emerged and the consequences proved nearly revolutionary, in both the short and long term (Findley 2010, p. 103).

Among the mid-term consequences was the formation of a generation of rebellious "Young Turks" around the turn of the twentieth century, including Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. A short-term consequence was the start of unofficial journalism, commonly accepted as the real beginning of Turkish journalism, with the launch of *Tercüman-ı Ahval* (*Interpreter of Events*) in 1861, to be followed by a number of dailies and periodicals, including those taking positions on current affairs as well as criticizing the government. By the mid-1860s the antigovernment attitude of the press was clear, as was the government's attitude towards the press. The first comprehensive press law was issued by the government in 1864, an adaptation of Napoleon III's strict French press law of 1851, to be followed by the infamous press ordinance of Âli Pasha in 1867 that closed numerous publications as well as banning several renowned journalists writing for opposition newspapers. As a prominent member of the Ottoman administration of the era, Âli Pasha is known for his argument, "I would not consider telling the weaknesses of the state to the nation to qualify as patriotic conduct" (İskit 1943, p. 25), in order to justify the "first institutionalized form of press censorship" (Kocabaşoğlu 1997, p. 37). In response, a number of journalists left for abroad to continue writing critically in opposition to the government, while in Ottoman territories numerous humorous and satirical publications became popular for waging subtle, indirect criticism of the Ottoman elite. Both Âli Pasha's antipatriotism accusation designed to silence

dissident speech and the search by such voices for other means to further their criticism would be among the defining characteristics of the following century-and-a-half, up until today.

The second phase of press development in the Ottoman Empire, 1870–1908, was characterized by the growing influence of newspapers both among the populace and in government circles (Karpaz 1964, p. 263), as well as harsher measures to control the press. In 1876, a two-chamber Ottoman Parliament was established following street demonstrations against Sultan Abdulaziz (1861–76) and his descent from the throne, which marked the beginning of the First Constitutional Era (*Meşrutiyet*). The new Emperor Abdulhamid II (1876–1908) was clearly aware of the public influence of the newspapers. Accordingly, he first nurtured friendly relations with journalists to keep them on his side, yet gradually abolished the freedom of the press, believing that most journalists were republicans at heart (Karpaz 1964, p. 264). After two years he adjourned the Parliament and waged a war on a critical press which had gained a brief period of freedom. The humorous newspaper *Hayal* (*Illusion*) of Teodor Kasab, for instance, was closed down because of a cartoon representing a man with tied hands and feet with a caption taken from the new constitution “the press is free within legal limits” (Kocabaşoğlu 1997, p. 38). As the satirist mocked, although it was purported that the press was free under the law, the limits posed on nonconforming voices would practically disable them. Following the bans, the number of newspapers fell dramatically; the surviving papers were institutionally censored more rigidly than ever before, opposition journalists were forbidden from practicing journalism, and their books were banned.

Namık Kemal (1840–88) was among the people whose books were banned under Abdulhamid II’s regime. He had been a significant figure among the founders of the Young Ottoman Society, the first modern-style opposition movement among Ottoman intellectuals (Findley 2010, p. 104), which fought for a representative and constitutional government in the 1860s. Upon his return home after four years of opposition press activity abroad, Namık Kemal emerged as the model and example for Turkish journalists of the era. He was revered by Young Ottomans as the “liberty-writer” or symbol of struggle against the absolutist Ottoman regime. The next generation of dissidents organized themselves under the rubric of the Young Turks, reflecting an ideological shift from Ottoman nationalism to Turkish nationalism. Their goals were not only to overthrow the oppressive regime of Abdulhamid II, but also to adhere to a representative government path defended by Namık Kemal. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was among the followers of Namık Kemal from his youth and, as stated by Deringil (1993, p. 170), one can trace the “shadow of Namık Kemal”

in the utterances and policies of the early Republican cadres, Mustafa Kemal being the most obvious example.⁷

*INFLUENCES ON ATATÜRK'S THINKING ABOUT SPEECH
AND ITS REGULATION*

Changes in social communications in the Ottoman Empire of the nineteenth century played an important part in the process of modernization and the concomitant growth of a feeling (first of Ottoman, then of Turkish) national consciousness (Mardin 1961, p. 250). The gradually increasing influence and popularity of the press were among the important drivers of this process. As it was the Ottoman government itself that had introduced modern media in order to enhance its own authority and sympathy for its policies, it opposed all attempts to use them for different purposes. Yet, newspapers, satirical magazines and other forms of speech were appropriated by diverse actors with critical opinions about the government, as well as about how the Empire should be saved. Even though, as Deringil argues, the state power attempted to curtail a whole new generation's access to potentially subversive literature, such as that of the writers of the Enlightenment, it proved to be impossible and with every day that passed more young minds became fired by Voltaire and Rousseau (Deringil 1993, pp. 167–8). Young Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a member of this generation. His attitudes and policies were shaped to a large degree by the ideas he encountered and the experiences he underwent as an activist in the Young Turks movement.

Young Turks were, thus, the products of a restricted yet intellectually formative era of speech in the late nineteenth century. As they developed their ideas and beliefs via the publications of the time, they used the press efficiently as the major tool to spread their opinions about saving the Empire, before their ascent to power in 1909. After the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era (*Meşrutiyet*) in 1908, diverse ideas were defended in these publications, including positivism and nationalism, pro-Islamism, Western-liberalism, and social democracy (Karpas 1964, p. 267), and an atmosphere of diverse voices flourished in Ottoman society, though only for a short while. As Karpas argues, under the Young Turks the press became directly associated with the emerging political parties and with a rather well-defined view of the nascent centralized

⁷ In addition to the opinions he would inherit from Namık Kemal, Mustafa Kemal inherited his second name, "Kemal", from him. His mathematics teacher, also named Mustafa, asked his attentive student to add a second name in order to avoid confusion and proposed Kemal, meaning "maturity" or "perfection." As it was also the name of Namık Kemal, Mustafa gladly accepted (Hanioglu 2011, p. 23).

national state. In 1912 their rule became intolerant to opposition. The Union and Progress government of Young Turks instituted a press law, inspired again by the French Press Law of 1881, where the very function of the press, it was held, imposed obligations on it, and these obligations had to be defined by the government. The brutal silencing of journalists, including with bullets, became an unfortunate and persisting component of Turkish press history, paralleling the period of a fierce ideological battle over the future of the crumbling Empire. Still, the Young Turks era had served, as Karpat argues, as a period of political training and experience when liberal ideas, borrowed from the West, were debated, tried, and, for the most part, found unworkable. With the Balkan War in 1913 ending in the loss of territories, there was a reaction against the West and an infusion of Turkish nationalism, which became the main theme in the modern-minded press (Karpat 1964, p. 269), found reflection with many of its readers and impressed Mustafa Kemal himself.

Mustafa Kemal, as an activist in the Young Turks movement, stood out as an intractable opponent of the personality cult surrounding Sultan Abdulhamid. In a sign of growing opposition to the sultan, many students at the imperial colleges (a hybrid of classical Ottoman education and modern French schooling) demonstrated an increasing aversion to any expression of loyalty to him (Hanioglu 2011, p. 39). Despite the moral disgust for the regime, however, the initial aims of the Ottoman officer corps, including Mustafa Kemal, were not revolutionary or destructive. Unlike contemporary revolutionaries elsewhere, such as the Bolsheviks, they felt a stubborn loyalty to the state and, accordingly, their main goal was to revive the ailing Empire and save it from collapse. According to Deringil, this was among the traits that are common both to Mustafa Kemal and Namik Kemal, as both ultimately sought “to be useful to the state.”

Ideological linkages between them went further than this: Namik Kemal saw the French Declaration of the Rights of Men and the Citizen as the “dawning of truth.” Deep belief in “progress” came down to the Republic via the bridge of the Young Turks. Namik Kemal’s belief in the “innate ability of man to progress” was very much a theme of republican ideology, to be established by Mustafa Kemal in 1923 (Deringil 1993, pp. 183–4).

Namik Kemal produced a “political philosophy” (Mardin 1962, p. 286), in which reconciliation between the West and East was sought via a return to the essence of Islamic law, *şariat*, to be reconciled with French revolutionary ideology as expressed by Rousseau and Voltaire. Central to Namik Kemal’s thinking was the concept of *meşveret*, or consultation, which he along with other young Ottoman thinkers saw to be a notion correspondent to “representative government” as opposed to an absolute monarchy. In this framework,

as a genuine republic and the most successful regime in the history of humankind. Following its example, justifying the limitation of freedom of speech for the sake of the Republic was therefore comprehensible. Like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, he considered the principal aim of a republic not to assure individual liberty but to give expression to the “general will” and, like Machiavelli, he thought that a true republic should pursue national strength even at the expense of individual freedom (Hanioglu 2011).

Until the beginning of the multiparty era in 1945, when speech organized in the form of political parties and press gained unprecedented freedom, Atatürk’s views, embodied in his Republican People’s Party (RPP) shaped the ways in which speech would be regulated in his utilitarian perspective. On the one hand this would involve brief periods when limitations on freedom of speech were expanded, such as 1923–5, 1929–31, and 1939–45. On the other hand, the overall logic of the single-party era (1925–45) was using forms of speech to unite the nation in accordance with Republican reforms. In addition to “traditional methods,” such as banning opposition voices, other more “contemporary and productive” methods (Kocabaşoğlu 1997, p. 55) were deployed. These included establishing patronage relations with press bosses, extending the RPP’s presence in social life via highly controlled spaces of speech, such as people’s houses (*halkevleri*) (Karpat 1974), the Public Orators Organisation (*Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı*) (Uzun 2010), and People’s Tribune (*Halk Kürsüsü*) (Bolat 2007), and refashioning existing mechanisms to survey public opinion, such as a “demands system” of petitioning (Akin 2007) and “party inspection tours.” All in all, as Mete Tunçay suggests, the difference between the Ottoman and Republican eras was that, in the former, the press refrained from what the government disdained, while in the latter period, it affirmatively published what the state desired (Tunçay 1987, p. 48). Thus, channels and spaces of speech were regulated in more versatile ways by the Republican regime, a strategy that worked until the beginning of the multiparty era. With political liberalization in 1945, first print and then political parties became platforms of expression for suppressed perspectives of different sorts, including those against Kemalist principles. The first opposition party to RPP rule, the Democrat Party, built its election campaign in 1946 on the claim of representing the nation whose voice has not been heard until then, embodied with their slogan: “[e]nough! The nation has the say” (“Yeter! Söz milletin”).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to explain facets of Turkish ideas of the role of speech in the structuring of society. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s thinking on speech and

its regulation are presented from a historical perspective, because of the pivotal role that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk played in the formulation of speech and press policies in modern Turkish history. Andrew Mango writes of Atatürk's practical experience as a military commander, the opposition he confronted from defenders of the Ottoman dynasty, the threat that the spreading communist and fascist ideologies in Europe and Asia posed to his leadership, and his knowledge of the severity of physical destruction throughout his nation (Mango 2002, pp. 361–6). Equally relevant was his record as a disciple of Western Enlightenment ideals interpreted in the late Ottoman context. Mustafa Kemal adopted a centralized approach to constructing the Turkish Republic, where opposition voices would be permitted only as long as they were deemed “useful” or supportive for his political program, the ultimate goal of which was to establish and protect the Republic he envisioned. The chapter demonstrates how current policies have roots, not only in Atatürk's approaches but in those Ottoman times.

In 2015, a popular trade book was published in Turkey on the history of journalism, entitled *From Palace to Palace: Tales of Turkish Journalism*. The title of the book refers to the introduction of the first newspaper by the Ottoman Palace, by the Sultan himself in 1831, and the current alarming situation of freedom of the press in Turkey. According to its author, repression of press freedom by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who also resides in a palace, White Palace (*Ak Saray*), illustrates an unfortunate continuity in this almost two-century-long trajectory of the press in Turkey (Alan 2015).

How do the period of Atatürk's rule and his policies regarding speech and its regulation fit in this journey from one palace to the other? One possibility is to consider Atatürk's era as a radical, libertarian break from the Ottoman Palace's strict limitations on speech, since Atatürk himself was a devoted Republican opposed to the absolute monarchy of Ottoman rule. The second way to answer the question is that, with regard to freedom of speech, Atatürk's period presented a significant difference neither from the rule of the Ottoman regime, nor from what followed afterwards until today, including the current AKP rule under President Erdoğan.

The first approach, the idea of rupture, is countered in this chapter by showing that in many ways Atatürk's understanding was shaped by the prevalent debates that took place in the late Ottoman era. Despite his radical Republican overtones, Atatürk's approach to speech and its limits was, to a large extent, a revamped or “modern” version of the mindset of late Ottoman governments. The second approach, that Atatürk's period was essentially continuous and consonant with what preceded and followed it, is similarly inaccurate. Even the minimal gains regarding freedom of speech as a result of regime change

towards a republic from a monarchy are sufficient to qualify this transition as “progressive,” despite significant deficiencies of the Republican era. During almost a century between Mustafa Kemal’s rule and AKP rule, although far from perfection in many respects (Akin 2011), Turkey has become a multiparty democracy, a signatory of international laws protecting the rights of speech and expression, while journalism has developed professional standards and other forms of public discourse have become common features of Turkish democracy.

Despite the transformations they brought along, Atatürk and successive Turkish governments inherited the utilitarian logic of speech from the Ottoman era, and applied it according to their own definitions of its utility. Atatürk’s support for speech that primarily served to protect the new regime led to its careful regulation by modern means. This has been transformed into successive governmental approaches, in which some governments restrict speech very much in their own interest of retaining power outweighing the public interest. Some governments have resorted to archaic methods of regulating speech, such as imprisoning if not killing “dissident” public figures. Yet, the utilitarian understanding of speech has been a lasting legacy and current problems about limitation of speech in digital platforms can best be understood in this context.

As veteran Internet scholar Akgül has written, Internet censorship in Turkey has rested mainly on two pillars: preventing “undesired” political messages and fighting pornography (Akgül and Kırıldoğ 2015). Turkey is no exception in the latter area; with regard to political messages, the scope of attacks on the “existing social system” is becoming increasingly vague. The ruling AKP and President Erdoğan are fervently seeking to transform the country into what the president calls the “New Turkey” (Akgül and Kırıldoğ 2015). AKP’s idea of a “New Turkey,” conservative and neo-liberal, embracing its Sunni-Muslim identity, becomes a Neo-Ottoman regional power. This vision carries with it a particular definition of utility, with regard to speech, as well as its regulation with many other measures.⁸ It casts a broad net as to what is unwanted and unconstructive.

A symbolic case is the recent limitation on Twitter, the most commonly used communication platform, particularly during the Gezi events between May and June 2013. Against the backdrop of widespread complaints about the direct and indirect control of mass media by the government, Twitter’s

⁸ Tim Arango’s article, entitled “Islamist websites in Turkey manage to evade strict internet censorship,” focuses on the religious sensibilities of the AKP and its difference from earlier governments: “Turkey was no paragon of free speech under its old secular and nationalist system, although, then, the frequent offense was to insult notions of ‘Turkishness.’ Now the government focuses on speech it deems insulting to Islam or the president, or that promotes atheism.” (Arango 2015).

significance increased further following the appearance of corruption-related material on a microblogging site about President Erdoğan and his four cabinet ministers. In response, Erdoğan first labeled Twitter “a menace to society,” then vowed to eradicate it, and the same day Twitter was blocked without a court order. Another method, milder than the wholesale banning of Twitter, has been the “removal request” ultimatums issued to Twitter by the government. According to Twitter’s own statistics covering the period July 2014–July 2015, requests from Turkey are higher than the aggregate requests from all other countries (Twitter 2015). Furthermore, Internet usage is controlled at the access point: Internet cafes are subject to stringent regulations, which extend beyond limits defined by the law (Akgül and Kırıldoğ 2015).

The case of Twitter dramatically recalls the regulation of speech in the prepress period of the Ottoman Empire. Then the coffeehouses, as the most significant spaces for speech, were banned, monitored by spies, and seditious themes were prohibited by religious or legal rulings. Since then, as presented in this chapter, the utilitarian logic of understanding speech has been inherited, while definitions of utility have changed as have the methods to set the limits of speech, in accordance with the priorities of successive governments. Likewise, throughout the same trajectory, the ensuing struggle to advance freedom of speech in Turkey has become part of the fight for democracy generally. Current problems, and their solutions, can be better understood through the debates and influences of the earlier transition and the special framing of the role of the press in that key period.

REFERENCES

- Akgül, M. and Kırıldoğ, M. 2015. “Internet censorship in Turkey,” June 3, 2015, *Internet Policy Review*. Available at: <http://policyreview.info/articles/analysis/internet-censorship-turkey>.
- Akin, A. 2011. “Desarrollo de los medios en Turquía: Cuando se abre la caja mágica de Pandora” (“Development of media in Turkey: Once Pandora’s box is open”), *Infoamérica–Iberoamerican Communication Review* (Special issue: The Emerging Nations’ Media Systems) 6: 97–114.
- Akin, Y. 2007. “Reconsidering state, party, and society in early republican Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39: 435–57.
- Alan, Ü. 2015. *Saraydan saraya: Türkiye’de gazetecilik masalı (From Palace to Palace: Tales of Turkish Journalism)*. Istanbul: Can.
- Arango, T. 2015. “Islamist websites in Turkey manage to evade strict internet censorship,” *New York Times*. March 13, 2015. Available at: www.nytimes.com/2015/03/14/world/europe/islamist-websites-in-turkey-manage-to-evade-strict-internet-censorship.html?_r=0.

- Arsan, N. 1997a. *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri (Atatürk's Speeches and Statements)*, 5th ed., vol. 1, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi: Ankara.
- 1997b. *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri (Atatürk's Speeches and Statements)*, 5th ed., vol. 2, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi: Ankara.
- 1997c. *Atatürk'ün söylev ve demeçleri (Atatürk's Speeches and Statements)*, 5th ed., vol. 3, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi: Ankara.
- "Bir aylık dünya şu'unu: Reiscümhur Hz. Ankara'dan, İstanbul'a gitmek üzere, hareket ettiler" ("Monthly news: President departed from Ankara to Istanbul") 1929. *Aynı Tarihi (Month's History)* 20(65): 4790-3.
- Bolat, B. S. 2007. *Milli bayram olgusu ve Türkiye'de yapılan Cumhuriyet Bayramı kutlamaları (1923-1960) (Notion of National Festival and Republic Festival Celebrations in Turkey (1923-1960))* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Hacettepe University, Ankara).
- Brockett, G. D. 2011. *How Happy to Call Oneself a Turk: Provincial Newspapers and the Negotiation of a Muslim National Identity*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Dean, M. 1999. *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage.
- Deringil, S. 1993. "The Ottoman origins of Kemalist nationalism: Namık Kemal to Mustafa Kemal," *European History Quarterly* 23(2): 66-91.
- Findley, C. 2010. *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Foucault, M. 1991. "Governmentality," in Burchell, G., Gordon, C., and Miller, P. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 87-104.
- Georgeon, F. 1999. "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Son Döneminde İstanbul Kahvehaneleri" ("Coffehouses in Istanbul during the late Ottoman period"), in Desmet-Grégoire, H. and François, G. (eds.), *Doğu'da Kahve ve Kahvehaneler (Coffee and Coffehouses in the East)* Ankara: Yapı Kredi, pp. 43-85.
- Gevgilili, A. 1990. *Türkiye'de yenileşme düşüncesi: Sivil toplum, basın ve Atatürk (Modernization Thought in Turkey: Civil Society, Press and Atatürk)*. İstanbul: Bağlam.
- Hattox, R. S. 1996. *Coffee and Coffehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.
- Hanioglu, M. Ş. 2011. *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Işın, E. 2001. "A social history of coffee and coffehouses," in Özpabalıyıklar, S. (ed.), *Coffee: Pleasures Hidden in a Bean*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, pp. 10-43.
- İskit, R. S. 1943. *Türkiye'de matbuat idareleri ve politikaları (Press Administrations and Policies in Turkey)*. İstanbul: Tan.
- Karpat, K. H. 1964. "Turkey: Mass media," in Ward, R. and Rustow, D. A. (eds.), *Political modernization in Japan and Turkey*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, pp. 255-82.
1974. "The impact of the People's Houses on the development of communication in Turkey: 1931-1951," *Die Welt des Islams* 15(1-4): 69-84.
- Kırlı, C. 2000. *The Struggle Over the Space: Coffehouses of Ottoman İstanbul, 1780-1845* (Unpublished PhD thesis, SUNY, Binghamton).
2009. "Surveillance and constituting the public in the Ottoman Empire," in Shami, S. (ed.), *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the*