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Editorial Note

The discipline of Political Science is mature enough to celebrate anniversaries. This year, the International Political Science Association (IPSA, a prime partner of the publisher of *IAPSS Politikon*) celebrates its 70th anniversary; next year, the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR, another important partner organization of IAPSS) celebrates 50 years since its foundation. There is, furthermore, a rich array of national disciplinary associations of various age and stages of development worldwide. This could indicate that the discipline is thriving and that its impact and relevance has grown over the last decades. At the same time, a number of criticisms have emerged especially against the very narrow specializations that may occasionally prevent ‘seeing the forest for the trees’ and make the outputs of the research irrelevant. To this, a historical criticism of the ‘dark origins’ of the discipline can be added: in the United States at least, political science emerged as a discipline that had endorsed racist prejudices and practices, and many political scientists of the early 20th century were trained in ‘scholarship’ supportive of such positions. Some of them even contributed to the engineering of legislation hostile to various, especially racial, minorities, as pointed out by the Past President of the American Political Science Association (Smith, 2019).

Few if any discipline explicitly include the study of justice, freedom, equality or (gradually and especially after the mid-20th century) human rights. Yet, it would perhaps be too much to expect that a discipline may emerge as resilient to the prevailing modes of the times in which it operates. Ralf Dahrendorf’s statement on the challenge of building a civil society as opposed to formal institutions and an economic system is well-known. Could his statement be applied to political science as a discipline? Creating written rules and bodies that aim to be standard-setters of the discipline is challenging but may be accomplished in a relatively short time. Creating a disciplinary discourse, present in specialized publications, regular meetings and other formats requires a more long-term commitment. Yet, it is the embedding of the scholarly discourse into the broader public discourse and the development of meaningful interactions within and beyond the scholarly circles that poses the most serious challenges, especially if the incentives from within the discipline do not necessarily require or encourage such interactions.

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1 There are diverse criticisms revolving around the ‘relevance’ of the discipline (relevance in itself being a concept in need of clarification). See the collection edited by Stoker, Peters, Pierre (2015). A particular take is provided by Rothstein (2015) in his chapter (also presented at the IAPSS World Congress 2017) where he argues for relevance in terms of proposing concrete solutions to ‘bad governance’ and other problems of human well-being. These more ‘practical’ notions of relevance, when read as an encouragement to focus on small-scale policy issues, are countered by scholars who assert that ‘by attempting to become more technical in the manner in which [political scientists] choose to address policy issues [they] may be denying [their] greatest claim to relevance’ (Peters, 2014: 290).

2 Obviously, the history of the discipline is much more complex, not linked to the United States only, and it cannot be covered here in full. For a historical account going back to Ancient Greece, see Almond (1998).

3 ‘It takes six months to create new political institutions; to write a new constitution and electoral laws. It may take six years to create a half-way viable economy. It will probably take sixty years to create a civil society’ (1990: 42).

4 Polemics on these issues continue among contemporary scholars and they would benefit from a more elaborate scrutiny than the selective overview presented in this Note.
By upholding its general focus instead of identifying a gap in the existing set of specialized publications, and by speaking to the political science student community, *IAPSS Politikon* aims to contribute to such discourse not only topic-wise but also by involving student and junior scholar voices with a strong interest and potential to contribute to the discussions within and beyond the narrow confines of the ‘core’ of the discipline. The current issue of the journal once again features timely contributions from different subfields. If one were to identify ‘labels’ for them, they would fall into political philosophy, public policy and the study of political institutions. Fortunately, however, all articles successfully resist the confinement to a very narrow subfield.

Thus, Verónica Gutman’s piece on the reasons why Latin American countries gradually embraced more extensive commitments of the international climate regime speaks to a range of subfields: political economy, international relations, international law and Latin American studies, to name a few. Her content analysis spanning two decades of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences generates a range of hypotheses for further research that may provide novel empirical support for theories of the influence of global governance bodies and of the transnational legal process.

Luigi Cino’s work speaks more directly to a particular theoretical account, the diverse traditions in the study of political institutions. He analyses the case of the Tunisian revolution through institutionalist lenses, trying to apply a number of typologies from existing literature in order to better understand the characteristics of the institutional change that took place after the Arab Uprisings. Again, his findings may be of interest beyond students of political institutionalisms such as constitutional scholars studying the MENA region or policy analysts of the developments in Tunisia.

Samantha Trudeau goes back to the ever-fruitful discussions of Greek philosophy, placing under scrutiny the rarely discussed (in political science at least) Plato’s dialogue ‘Lesser Hippias’. With its philosophical approach, her article maintains an interdisciplinary focus. The perhaps most relevant finding for political philosophy is its reconciliation of Socrates’ seemingly deceptive actions in the dialogue and his intentions that are found to be fundamentally in line with the conventional perception of Socrates as possessing deep understanding of truth and justice. The article’s interpretation makes a distinction between different audiences, thus contributing to modern studies of rhetoric as well by highlighting the dynamics of interactions between the speakers and their (often contrasting) audiences (such as Hippias and Socrates’ students). The result makes an interesting read for political communication enthusiasts as well, even more commendable in times of growing popular concerns about a ‘post-truth world’.

Lastly, Yankı Doruk Doğanay’s paper takes us geographically to Turkey and conceptually to a higher level of abstraction as it offers an unconventional analysis of the sources of support of the contemporary Turkish government. This methodology allows to uncover how several components of the Turkish political leaders’ discourse contribute to cementing their support, even though conventionally they would be seen as sources of weakness. Some of these techniques go beyond ‘mainstream’ studies of populist rhetoric and thus offer original
perspectives on how a counter-discourse with higher prospects of success (recognizing the institutional limitations caused by limited political rights) may be developed. Clearly, the paper’s approach speaks to inquiries in political psychology as well as in critical theory and Turkish studies.

In addition, readers may find it stimulating to think about the review of Francis Fukuyama’s new book ‘Identity: Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition’) written by Joshua Makalintal, which assesses the book’s main theses from the angle of contemporary critical theory.

The Editorial Board continues to welcome submissions to the journal on a rolling basis, noting that the 14 original articles published in the four issues of 2019 automatically enter the competition for the journal’s 2020 Best Article Award. More information on that is to follow in the new year.

Max Steuer
Editor-in-Chief

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A Behavioural Approach to International Climate Negotiations: An Analysis of Latin American Strategies from Berlin to Paris

Verónica Gutman

Verónica Gutman, from Buenos Aires (Argentina), is a PhD graduate specialising in Environmental Economics, climate change and sustainable development. She received her PhD degree in 'Economic Sciences' at the University of Buenos Aires in 2015. Her PhD thesis focused on climate change negotiations and mitigation incentives. She currently works at the Torcuato Di Tella Foundation (FTDT) in Buenos Aires. Her interests include the Economics of climate change, international negotiations, climate policy, regulatory frameworks, climate finance, carbon prices, carbon markets, low emission development strategies and behavioural change. E-mail: verogutman@hotmail.com.

Abstract

The article analyses the strategies of Latin American countries in international climate negotiations, their main determinants and modifications in the last twenty years. It aims at understanding why at the beginning of the negotiation process in the 1990s Latin American countries were reluctant to make GHG mitigation commitments but at present they have all signed the Paris Agreement and are working on implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Content analysis was performed on Latin American delegates’ declarations in UNFCCC Climate Change Conferences (COPs) between 1995 and 2014. The article identifies the economic and governance incentives that have been introduced in the international climate regime to induce behavioural change among developing countries’ decision makers, including economic instruments (carbon markets), higher recognition of equity issues within the UNFCCC participation mechanisms, availability of new information, climate finance provision and growing trade restrictions for market access based on the carbon content of exported products.

Keywords

Behavioural Change; Climate Change; International Negotiations; Latin America; Mitigation Commitments; Paris Agreement
Introduction

At the beginning of the climate change negotiation process in the 1990s, developing countries were opposed to making greenhouse gases (GHG) mitigation commitments similar to those made by developed countries within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol was the climate treaty signed in 1997 that established quantitative GHG reduction targets for developed countries (the so-called ‘Annex I countries’\(^1\)) based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. This principle acknowledges that countries have different capabilities in combating climate change and that the obligation to reduce GHG emissions should fall mostly on developed nations, given their historical responsibility for the current levels of GHG in the atmosphere.

Climate negotiations went on with advances, setbacks and crossroads until the Paris Agreement was finally adopted in 2015 at the 21\(^{st}\) Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 21). The Paris Agreement aims at keeping global temperature well below 2\(^\circ\) C above pre-industrial levels and pursues efforts to limit further temperature increase to 1.5\(^\circ\) C. It builds on the voluntary efforts that individual countries, including developing countries, are willing to commit to. These commitments are expressed in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that are submitted every five years to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

The research question this article aims to address is what has caused this observed change in developing countries’ negotiation strategies regarding participation in the global GHG mitigation effort since the 1990s, with focus on Latin America.

From an international climate policy perspective, this question is relevant to the debate on whether the Paris Agreement has been a multilateral negotiation success or rather a failure. On the one hand, climate negotiations have moved from the discussion of a more ambitious top-down agreement in the 1990s (the Kyoto Protocol), which established a global GHG reduction goal (5.2% compared to 1990 levels by the end of the 2008-2012 first commitment period) and obligated developed nations to accomplish quantitative GHG reduction targets, to the discussion of a bottom-up accord (the Paris Agreement) which is based on the submission of voluntary national contributions based on the mitigation effort each country is willing to commit to. On the other hand, the Kyoto Protocol had limited durability and participation while the Paris Agreement is applicable to all countries (including developing countries) and will probably have a greater permanence of efforts over time, since

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1 The term refers to the developed economies that are listed in Annex I to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) signed in 1992.
mitigation objectives in each country are embedded within national circumstances and development priorities.

From an economic perspective, the research question is relevant to the discussion on whether the incentives that have been introduced in the international climate regime in the last twenty years have been effective in inducing behavioural change among developing countries’ decision-makers.

The ultimate goal of this research is to demonstrate that there has been a break in the negotiation positions of Latin American countries regarding climate change mitigation efforts since the 1990s and analyse the reasons behind it by identifying the global incentive structure that has been created within the international climate regime.

The article begins with a brief outline of the theoretical framework for analysing climate change from an economic perspective and a literature review of the approaches for fostering GHG mitigation and inducing countries’ participation in international climate agreements.

The article then documents the shift in Latin American negotiation positions regarding GHG mitigation by analysing the evolution of the oral declarations made by national delegates and Heads of State during the twenty UNFCCC Climate Change Conferences (COPs) held between 1995 and 2014. These declarations have been taken from the *Earth Negotiation Bulletins* (ENB), the daily reports that are published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) during United Nations environment and development negotiations. These bulletins are the most complete available source that reports on the debates and the interventions made by country representatives. Content analysis was conducted to analyse the discourse change of Latin American delegates over time and identify the key words related to engagement in climate change mitigation efforts that have been discussed for developing countries and how they have changed as time went by.

Finally, the article identifies and analyses the incentives that have been introduced in the international climate regime since the 1990s in order to achieve global participation in the mitigation effort. These incentives have been both economic (introduction of economic instruments -emission trading schemes- which created the so-called ‘carbon markets’) and related to global governance mechanisms (higher recognition of equity issues within the UNFCCC participation mechanisms, availability of new information regarding climate impacts and co-benefits of mitigation, North-South compensation schemes -transfers-
articulated through the provision of climate finance flows and growing consideration of trade restrictions for market access based on the carbon content of exported products).

**Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

In economics, climate change is conceived as the result of a market failure derived from a global negative externality, i.e. a consequence of human activity that affects others without being reflected on market prices (Stern, 2006). Damages caused by the accumulation of GHG in the atmosphere are not included in goods and services prices and therefore are not considered in production decisions. Thus, markets overproduce CO₂-intensive goods and services because GHG emissions costs are not priced in transactions. To restore efficiency in a market with externalities, incentives need to be introduced in order to make GHG emitters internalise the costs they impose on society.

The economic literature groups climate change policy incentives into two broad categories. On the one hand, there are positive and negative incentives provided by different climate policy instruments aimed at modifying individual behaviour. These policy instruments can either be ‘command and control’ or economic (‘market-based’). ‘Command and control’ instruments impose direct limits and restrictions on emitters (e.g. prohibitions, emission standards or quotas, technological standards), while economic instruments introduce a price linked to the behaviour that is to be discouraged or encouraged (e.g. carbon taxes, subsidies, emission trading systems, payments for environmental services). From a theoretical point of view, carbon taxes and emission trading systems emerge as the optimal policy options to correct climate externalities since they provide price signals that make emitters face appropriate incentives for GHG reduction and technological innovation (Weitzman, 1974; Tietenberg, 1998; Milliman and Prince, 1989; Pizer, 2002; Aldy and Stavins, 2008).

On the other hand, there are incentives provided by global governance mechanisms and the architecture of international agreements aimed at generating behavioural changes in sovereign states. For these incentives to work, involved parties must be motivated by either the derivation of net benefits from collective action or the imposition of sanctions for not participating in an international effort. International agreements must therefore be able to generate changes in perceptions regarding country-level costs and benefits, enforce cooperation and reciprocal trust among participants, generate and spread reliable information and foster learning and communication processes (Ostrom, 2012, 2009; Nemet, 2010; Abbott, 2012; Knieling and Filho, 2013; Meadowcroft, 2009; Barrett, 2003, 2008). In order for international treaties to be effective, efficient and stable, at least three conditions
must be met: i) agreements should be rational from an individual perspective (i.e. each country should perceive that it will gain benefits from participating); ii) they should be rational from a collective perspective (i.e. parties as a whole should be better off after the implementation of the agreement); and iii) they should be perceived as equitable and fair (i.e. they should be based on a symmetric distribution of net benefits or, at least, consider international compensations and cross subsidies mechanisms). The instruments that may induce behavioural change through international climate agreements include positive and negative economic incentives (e.g. information provision, financial transfers mechanisms, trade restrictions), provisions for the entry into force of the agreement and enforcement mechanisms (e.g. sanctions or penalties for non-compliance) (Barrett, 2003, 2008).

Climate change is also defined as a social dilemma, i.e. a collective action situation that exhibits conflict between individual and collective interests. In these situations, some authors argue that individual behaviour may affect collective behaviour and lead to cooperation levels higher than expected due to the fact that individuals give positive or negative internal valuations to particular types of action, meaning that they adopt certain moral perspectives to guide their choices towards the direction they internally believe is ‘ethically correct’, going even beyond the monetary benefits they can directly accrue. This type of individual behaviour affects others’ behaviour and expectations, which results in the development of collective shared beliefs about what actions should be implemented and the penalties that should be applied in the case of misbehaviour (Ostrom, 1997; Ostrom et al, 1994). Therefore, to induce behavioural change not only is the provision of new information essential, but the way the information is presented is also key. The presentation of information influences how it is processed because human beings think differently about gains and losses depending on the status quo. Thus, if a decision task is framed in a way that alters the perceived status quo, then choice behaviour can be altered. This means that there are contextual effects, which generally refer to the current and historical settings in which choices are made (McFadden, 1999; Kahneman and Tversky, 1984).

The historical setting of international climate negotiations builds on the past North-South relations concerning international trade and markets. With regards to Latin America, the region has modelled its social and economic structure around external needs since colonial times. Latin American countries have historically identified themselves with the goods they have produced and have developed production patterns according to the mandate of colonial or trade powers. Therefore, economic activity has centred on natural resource exploitation and export (Fajnzylber, 2006; Bulmer-Thomas, 1998; ECLAC, 1988; Gligo and
Morello, 1980; Galeano, 1971). The analysis of the connections between markets and the environment allows for an understanding of why Latin America (and other developing regions) has specialised in the production and export of goods that deplete environmental resources and also explains why global climate change negotiations have emerged and developed as a North-South issue (Chichilnisky, 1994). This means that preconceptions and learned facts (including perceptions about world history) affect the way in which decision makers conceive global geopolitics and power relations regarding climate issues.

Developing countries’ decision makers’ perceptions of gains and losses associated to participating in an international climate agreement prevalent in the 1990s needed to be modified in order to achieve global participation in the GHG mitigation effort. The following sections analyse the elements that have contributed to modifying these perceptions, after introducing and justifying the data sources and research methods used throughout the research.

**Methodology and Data**

In order to analyse if there had been a break in the Latin American negotiation strategies regarding GHG mitigation efforts since the 1990s, this article focuses on the countries that were already developing national mitigation actions prior to the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015. The aim is to study the evolution of the negotiation positions of those countries that showed a higher comparative performance regarding climate action already in 2014.

Firstly, the database used for selecting these countries is presented together with an explanation of the methodology used for analysing and documenting the change in the diplomatic discourse of Latin American negotiators over time. Then, the methods applied for analysing the words and concepts used in the discussions related to developing countries’ participation in the global mitigation effort and for assessing the incentives to foster mitigation and participation in international climate agreements that have been introduced in the international climate architecture since the 1990s are explained.

**Change in Latin American Negotiation Strategies Since the 1990s**

The database used to identify the countries that were already developing mitigation actions prior to the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 was Ecofys NAMA Database (Ecofys, 2014), which shares information on Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) collected from publicly available information. These NAMAs refer to voluntary national-level mitigation initiatives that can apply for international support. They were first negotiated in 2007 at COP 13 held in Bali, Indonesia. At this COP it was agreed that
developing countries would not make mandatory mitigation commitments as developed countries did but would rather implement GHG emission reduction actions that would be voluntary, in line with national economic development priorities and supported by developed countries through financial resources and technological transfer.

According to this database, nine Latin American countries were working on national mitigation actions (NAMAs) up to December 2014: Mexico (22 initiatives), Colombia (13 initiatives), Chile (9 initiatives), Peru (9 initiatives), Dominican Republic (6 initiatives), Uruguay (5 initiatives), Costa Rica (5 initiatives), Argentina (2 initiatives) and Brazil (2 initiatives). It is worth pointing out that this database is currently out-of-date, since the relevant international efforts regarding GHG mitigation in developing countries have moved forward from NAMAs to NDCs. However, the database provides useful information regarding developing countries’ mitigation efforts before the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015.

To analyse and document the change in the diplomatic discourse over time, quotes related to Latin American negotiators’ interventions in discussions on developing countries’ participation in the global mitigation effort were extracted from the IISD Earth Negotiation Bulletins. It should be mentioned that Latin American countries have historically expressed their positions in climate negotiations grouped together within the G-77/China and other alliances (AOSIS², ALBA³, AILAC⁴, among others). This means that many declarations include oral statements made by representatives of the negotiation groups to which they have belonged.


**Words and Concepts Used in the Discussions Related to Developing Countries’ Participation in the Global Mitigation Effort**

In order to analyse if there had been a change in the terminology that had been used in discussions related to developing countries’ participation in the global mitigation effort

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² “AOSIS” stands for Alliance of Small Island States  
³ “ALBA” stands for Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America  
⁴ “AILAC” stands for Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean
through time, a qualitative assessment was first conducted on the IISD ENB bulletins, with special focus on the sections dedicated to mitigation discussions. Most frequent words that emerged in the debates include the concepts of ‘mandatory commitments’ to reduce GHG emissions, ‘voluntary nationally appropriate mitigation actions’ (‘NAMAs’) and ‘voluntary contributions’. A word frequency count analysis was then conducted throughout the 1995-2014 IISD ENB in order to assess quantitatively the most used words during each COP. The analysis was conducted on the words ‘commitments’ (in relation to developing countries’ engagement), ‘NAMAs’ and ‘contributions’.

**Incentives to Foster Mitigation and Participation in International Climate Agreements**

Finally, a qualitative assessment was undertaken in order to analyse whether the incentives that foster mitigation and participation in international climate agreements, as identified in the literature review, have been effectively introduced within the international climate regime. The specific incentives that were looked for and analysed were the following:

1. Economic instruments
2. Increasing consideration of equity and fairness issues regarding developing countries’ participation mechanisms in the global mitigation effort
3. Information generation and spread
4. Financial transfers mechanisms
5. Sanctions for misbehaviour

**Analysis and Findings**

The conducted analysis shows that there has effectively been a change in Latin American negotiation strategies since the 1990s and that incentives to foster mitigation and participation have been introduced in the international climate architecture since the 1990s. These findings are presented below.

**Change in Latin American Negotiation Strategies Since the 1990s**

Mexico, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Colombia, Brazil and Dominican Republic, seven out of the nine Latin American countries that were undertaking mitigation actions (NAMAs) already before the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, refused to accept mitigation commitments at the beginning of the climate negotiations in the 1990s. The breaking point in their refusal strategy can be identified in 2007, when the ‘NAMA’ concept emerged. From then on, these countries began to show a higher willingness to undertake broader national mitigation actions.
Costa Rica and Argentina have somehow been an exception. In 1997-1999 both countries expressed their willingness to make mitigation commitments similar to those made by developed countries within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. Costa Rica has defended since then a stable position in favor of making voluntary mitigation efforts, while Argentina has moderated its position with the successive government changes.

On the other hand, a group of countries led by Bolivia and comprised mostly in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) has historically been opposed to making mitigation efforts similar to those of developed countries. Their arguments have been based on the notion that ‘developed countries have expropriated more of their share of the Earth's environmental space’ (IISD, 2009: 12) and that they should ‘honour their climate debt’ (IISD, 2009: 16). However, even these countries have finally agreed to sign the Paris Agreement and have submitted NDCs to the UNFCCC.


**Words and Concepts Used in the Discussions Related to Developing Countries’ Participation in the Global Mitigation Effort**

The word frequency count shows that the use of the term ‘commitments’ (related to developing countries’ participation in the global mitigation effort) peaked in the discussions that led to the signature of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (COP 3), fell in 1999 and resurfaced in the negotiations on the post-2012 period that began in 2005. The term then disappeared in 2007 (COP 13-Bali), when it was agreed that developing countries would implement NAMAs, and it reappeared in 2012 in the negotiations aimed at developing a new protocol by 2015 (the Paris Agreement).

The term ‘NAMA’ emerged in 2007, associated, as it was mentioned above, to voluntary actions based on sustainable development priorities for developing countries.

Finally, during COP 19 held in Warsaw in 2013, an agreement on the term ‘contribution’ was reached, as a result of a transaction between the terms ‘commitment’ and ‘nationally appropriate mitigation actions’, paving the way for the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015. Specifically, in 2013 it was agreed that both developed and developing countries would submit Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) before December 2015, which would communicate the national GHG emission reductions each country would accomplish in the context of their national circumstances and capabilities.
The word ‘intended’ was introduced because countries were communicating proposed climate actions before the adoption of the Paris Agreement. As countries formally joined the agreement, the term ‘intended’ was omitted and ‘INDCs’ were converted into ‘NDCs’ (‘Nationally Determined Contributions’) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Words used in the 1995-2014 Climate Change Conferences (COPs) in discussions on developing countries’ participation in the global mitigation effort


As shown in the quotes presented in Annex, the opposition of most developing countries to undertake mitigation efforts similar to those of developed countries’ coincides over time with the discussions based on ‘commitments’. After the agreement on the term ‘NAMA’ was reached at COP 13 (in 2007), a new space for dialogue was opened.

**Incentives to Foster Mitigation and Participation in International Climate Agreements**

Different types of incentives have been introduced in the international climate architecture that has been created since the 1990s, including economic instruments, increasing consideration of equity and fairness issues within developing countries’ participation mechanisms, information generation and proliferation, financial transfer mechanisms and sanctions for misbehaviour, analysed below.

**Economic Instruments**

The Kyoto Protocol introduced three market-based flexibility mechanisms aimed at providing developed countries with additional means of meeting their GHG reduction targets and encouraging developing countries and the private sector to join the GHG
emissions reduction efforts. These mechanisms, which created the so-called ‘carbon markets’, were: i) Emissions Trading (ET); ii) Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and iii) Joint Implementation (JI).

Developed countries’ GHG reduction targets within the Kyoto Protocol have been expressed as levels of allowed emissions over the 2008-2012 commitment period. ET allows industries in developed countries that had excess allowed emissions to sell them to facilities that are over their targets. Meanwhile, CDM and JI are project-based mechanisms. CDM involves investment in mitigation projects in developing countries that contribute to their sustainable development, while JI enables developed countries to invest in mitigation projects in other developed countries. CDM and JI projects generate credits according to the emissions they avoid or reduce compared to a baseline. The Kyoto Protocol allowed developed countries to partly meet their GHG reduction commitments by buying allowed emissions and CDM and JI certificates. Therefore, a new commodity was created in the form of GHG emission reductions.

One of the most important contributions of carbon markets has been that participants from both developed and developing countries have experienced decision-making in a market context with the commodification of GHG emissions.

With regards to the CDM, over 8,000 projects in renewable energy production, efficient cookstoves, landfill and waste management, and afforestation and reforestation have avoided or reduced 2 billion tonnes of CO$_2$e and have enabled USD 300 billion investments since 2001. 72% of these projects have been developed in the renewables sector, with wind (31%) and hydro (26%) accounting for the lion’s share. Although the countries that have benefitted mostly from the CDM have been big economies already attracting high levels of economic investment, such as China, India, Mexico, Brazil and Korea, 111 developing countries including least developed countries and small island developing states have managed to benefit by undertaking CDM projects. In addition, by allowing companies to develop projects and trade certificates, the CDM has mobilised the private sector and has contributed to creating awareness of the need for climate action. CDM has also enhanced the learning processes of baseline analysis, construction of mitigation and development scenarios and application of methodologies for estimating mitigation potentials and project costs (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2018).

The future of global carbon markets under the Paris Agreement is uncertain, mainly because at present every country, including developing countries, has GHG reduction targets (NDCs) to comply with. Unlike the times of the Kyoto Protocol, when developing countries
were eager to sell their emission reductions to buyers in developing countries under the CDM, at present even developing countries have mitigation targets to comply with, which requires them to keep the emission reduction options for themselves. Negotiators are still discussing how to use markets and market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement.

Increasing Consideration of Equity and Fairness Issues Regarding Developing Countries’ Participation in the Global Mitigation Effort

Ethical and equity questions regarding climate change responsibility and fairness in the mitigation effort burden-sharing have been central in North-South climate debates since the 1990s. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992; Article 4) recognises that developed countries (included in Annex I of the Convention) are expected to take the lead regarding mitigation action, assume a greater share of the burden of the mitigation effort and provide financial resources to developing countries to meet the incremental costs of implementing mitigation measures. However, in practice, Annex I countries have been putting pressure on the more advanced developing states (namely, China, India, Mexico and Brazil) to undertake more ambitious actions. Meanwhile, debates on financial resources provision have developed within different negotiation tracks, although effective paid up resources have never reached the levels required by developing countries. Whether this constitutes a departure from the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities has been a central issue of debate (Schwarte and Massawa, 2009).

Negotiations were at a crossroads, with developed countries trying to make developing countries adopt mitigation commitments and developing countries claiming that this did not respect ethical and fairness principles, until 2007 when the agreement based on the ‘NAMA’ concept managed to untangle debates. Developing countries would implement more ambitious climate actions but on a voluntary basis and according to their national capacities and development priorities. Furthermore, developing countries would count on new additional finance, technological transfer and capacity building support from developed countries. This agreement based on the concept of ‘NAMA’ prepared the ground for negotiating, later, further mitigation efforts under the form of ‘national voluntary contributions’, which finally materialised in the form of NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC within the framework of the Paris Agreement.

In this sense, the Paris Agreement builds on a governance structure that has been perceived as more equitable than the Kyoto Protocol. Not only has it reoriented the international regime towards a ‘bottom-up’ approach but it also emphasises national
flexibility in order to ensure broader participation and accommodates ‘national circumstances’ and voluntary contributions as a new context for fairness. Thus, the Paris Agreement has managed to provide a different answer to the question of what constitutes an equitable and fair response to climate change (Chan, 2016).

**Information Generation and Spread**

Prior to climate change conferences, negotiators identify the issues that will likely be discussed, understand their position on each issue, evaluate options and finally determine their priorities across different issues. Therefore, information is key to success in negotiations (Young et al, 2012).

International organisations have made deliberate efforts to generate and disseminate information on the expected impacts of climate change as well as on the synergies that may exist between climate change mitigation and national development goals such as poverty reduction, food and energy security and adaptation to the expected effects of climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation in partnership with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), has been the leading international scientific body related to climate change research dissemination. The IPCC Assessment Reports (IPCC, 1990; 1995; 2001; 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2013; 2014a; 2014b) have played a key role in defining agreements and discussion agendas. Along similar lines, United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations and development banks have been responsible for the development of international campaigns and agendas (such as the Sustainable Development Goals) and the creation of multiple programs to enhance climate action with focus on providing support to developing countries, such as the REDD+ program, aimed at reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, or the Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN), aimed at promoting the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for low carbon and climate resilient development.

The generated information has been communicated with special focus on two issues: i) the expected climate change impacts and the consequences of inaction; ii) the economic, social and environmental co-benefits GHG mitigation may generate specially in developing countries (eg. energy savings and employment generation in new sectors such as renewable energies).

**Financial Transfer Mechanisms**

A complex international financial architecture has been created to channel financial resources for mitigation and adaptation actions to developing countries. Specially, the
creation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2010 as part of the UNFCCC financial mechanisms incorporated an additional equity mechanism for resource provision through concessional lending instruments, a 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation investments and the allocation of 50% of the climate change adaptation funds for particularly vulnerable countries. The GCF’s current portfolio has more than 100 projects benefitting more than 300 million people and avoiding the emission of 1.5 billion tCO₂ through the investment of USD 3.5 billion.

**Sanctions for Misbehaviour**

Although neither the UNFCCC (1992) nor the Kyoto Protocol (1997) or the Paris Agreement (2015) include explicit sanctions for non-accomplishment of mitigation targets or contributions, there is a growing threat of trade sanctions imposition associated to the carbon content of exported products. For example, in 2007 the United States Congress introduced the Lieberman-Warner America’s Climate Security Act (S.2191) which included the proposal of applying border tax adjustments (BTAs) to imports from countries that had not taken action comparable to that taken by the United States to limit GHG emissions. Other climate bills such as Bingaman-Specter in 2007, Waxman-Markey in 2009 and Kerry-Boxer in 2009 included similar provisions. With regards to the European Union, it enacted the Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) in 2009, establishing that imported biofuels must demonstrate GHG emission savings as compared to the fossil fuel they replace and that the raw materials used for production had not been planted in a previously deforested land.

The possibility of extending the evaluation of international suppliers based on the carbon footprint of exported products is of particular concern for developing countries, including Latin America, given the export profile and productive specialisation relatively intensive in natural resources.

**Conclusion**

Latin American countries have changed their negotiation strategies within the UNFCCC Climate Change Conferences (COPs) regarding their participation in the global mitigation effort in the last twenty years. While they were opposed to making mitigation commitments similar to those undertaken by developed countries within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol in the 1990s, in 2015 they adopted the Paris Agreement and submitted their first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the UNFCCC. The NDCs are national documents that articulate the climate actions countries compromise to implement within their territories.
Content analysis conducted on the oral declarations made by Latin American delegates and Heads of State throughout the 1995-2014 UNFCCC COPs, as reported in the IISD Earth Negotiation Bulletins, shows a first breaking point in discourse in 2007, when it was agreed that developing countries would not undertake mandatory mitigation commitments but would instead implement voluntary Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), with financial and technological support from developed countries. The agreement on the notion of ‘NAMAs’ paved the way for agreeing in 2011 that all countries would make mitigation efforts under a new protocol that would be developed by 2015. The learning process of developing countries in planning ‘national-level voluntary mitigation actions’, which depended on continuous support from United Nations agencies and other multilateral organisations, prepared the ground for the emergence of a new bottom-up climate protocol based on voluntary mitigation ‘contributions’ from all countries (the Paris Agreement).

The change in terminology referring to developing countries’ participation in the global mitigation effort, moving forward from the notion of ‘commitments’ to ‘NAMAs’ and finally to ‘contributions’, was accompanied by the introduction of different types of incentives within the international climate regime aimed at inducing perception and behavioural change among developing countries’ decision makers. These incentives have been in line with the theoretical recommendations of the economic literature to encourage mitigation efforts and enhance participation in international climate agreements. Five such incentives can be identified.

Firstly, economic instruments were introduced through the inclusion of emission trading mechanisms within the Kyoto Protocol, which gave birth to the so-called ‘carbon markets’. Developing countries were able to participate in this first experience of decision-making in a context with market prices for GHG emissions by undertaking mitigation projects under the CDM. Secondly, equity and fairness issues regarding mitigation burden-sharing was given higher consideration within the mechanisms discussed for including developing countries in the global mitigation effort. While Annex I countries put pressure on developing countries to accept mandatory mitigation commitments, agreement was not possible. When a different participation scheme based on voluntary actions with international support was considered, developing countries’ participation was finally achieved. Thirdly, deliberate efforts were made by international organisations to generate and spread information related to the impacts and costs of inaction and the development co-benefits that can be associated to mitigation actions, with the IPCC and United Nations
agencies playing a key role. Fourthly, an international compensation (transfer) scheme was created through the development of a global climate financial architecture that currently channels most resources for mitigation and adaptation actions to developing countries through the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Finally, sanctions for non-compliance in the form of threats of imposition of trade barriers based on the carbon content of export products began to consolidate at the international level. This has been especially so in the United States and Europe, which are key export markets for Latin American countries.

From an international policy perspective, the main implication of these findings is that it is important to have a retrospective and dynamic look of the international climate process, since the global governance architecture that has been created since the 1990s has been able to foster transformation processes and behavioural change, finally including developing countries in an international climate agreement applicable to all. Although the submitted NDCs are insufficient for preventing temperature increases above 2 °C, the Paris Agreement itself is a valuable framework for achieving further reductions in the future, since it establishes provisions for countries submitting new contributions every five years which should represent progressions beyond the previous ones.

After documenting the change in Latin American countries’ negotiation positions regarding participation in the global mitigation effort since the 1990s and identifying the economic and governance incentives that have been introduced in the international climate regime, the next research steps involve testing empirically if these incentives have effectively induced the observed behavioural changes among Latin American decision makers. Surveys with negotiators and econometric studies should be conducted to test causality between the introduced incentives and negotiators’ perception change regarding costs and benefits of joining an international climate agreement with a more active role.

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Appendix

Evolution of Latin American Delegates’ Declarations in Climate Change Conferences (COPs) regarding GHG Mitigation Efforts (COP 1-COP 20 / 1995-2014)

COP 1 (1995) - Berlin, Germany

“The G-77/China stated that [...] the responsibility [for mitigation] should not be transferred from Annex I Parties to non-Annex I Parties [...] and [...] stressed the need for a Protocol that imposed commitments only for Annex I parties’ (IISD, 1995; page 3).

‘Brazil said that [...] the right of developing countries to develop should not be put in risk and that trying to involve developing countries in a hasty manner [...] will not solve the problems [...] The [Brazilian] delegation does not want to exchange ‘smoke for trees’ [...] (Ibid: 4-5).

‘Colombia said that developing countries should not assume the same obligations as developed countries’ (Ibid: 5).

COP 2 (1996) - Geneva, Switzerland

‘Delegates from developing countries expressed dissatisfaction with what they considered an attempt by developed countries to shift the weight of implementation [of mitigation measures] from Annex I Parties to non-Annex I Parties [...] These delegates strongly objected the language that proposed that the mitigation projects carried out in non-Annex I countries should be financed by themselves’ (IISD, 1996: 12).

COP 3 (1997) - Kyoto, Japan

‘The G-77/China took every opportunity to keep away from any attempt to attract developing countries to accept any element that could be interpreted as new commitments’ (IISD, 1997: 2).

‘Costa Rica said that the Kyoto Protocol should include […] an active voluntary participation of developing nations’ (Ibid: 5).

‘Developing countries […] stressed that the Berlin Mandate does not provide for developing countries to take responsibility for what it is, essentially, the result of industrialised countries’ actions’ (Ibid: 6).

‘The G-77/China, supported by […] Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Costa Rica […] and Argentina, said that the concepts of ‘equity’ and ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ were key for success. The group highlighted the low per capita emissions of developing countries and their priorities regarding economic and social development. This is not the time to address developing countries’ commitments but to strengthen developed countries’. The group concluded with a word: ‘no’ [...] Brazil said that a declaration from a developed country had implied ‘if you do not comply, we do not comply’, to which he replied ‘until you do not comply, we do not debate’ (Ibid: 13).
‘Although the Summit achieved the signing of the Kyoto Protocol [...] the ambition to universalise the imperative to reduce global GHG emissions through expanded participation to developing countries holds several steps back’ (Ibid: 15).

COP 4 (1998) - Buenos Aires, Argentina

‘Argentina [said that] developing countries share some responsibility for climate change and that they have an ethical obligation to ensure sustainable development’ (IISD, 1998: 2).

‘Brazil warned about the fact that assigning mitigation commitments to developing countries [...] did not seek to promote the principles of the Convention but rather would help some developed countries avoid their existing commitments [...]. China said that [...] the assumption of commitments would destroy the unity of the G-77/China [...]. Colombia suggested discussing the vulnerability of developing nations instead of their commitments’ (Ibid: 3).

Cuba [...] opposed to any attempt to force developing countries to assume commitments [...]. Bolivia stressed that the [...] the limits [of Argentina] on their emissions could neither constitute a precedent nor compromise other countries to make similar commitments (Ibid: 11).

Developing countries raised their guard against any attempt to impose new obligations or associated conditionalities [...]. The G-77/China continues to consider it inappropriate to make commitments given the poor performance of Annex I Parties, while developed countries insist that the problem is the lack of global participation, particularly by key developing countries such as China and Brazil’ (Ibid: 14).

COP 6 (2000-2001) - The Hague, Netherlands; Bonn, Germany

‘The G-77/China rejected the proposal of a 'key Annex I country' to condition the provision of financial assistance to some form of new emissions reduction commitments for developing countries” (IISD, 2000: 3).

COP 7 (2001) - Marrakech, Morocco

‘The G-77/China stated that COP 7 [...] was not the appropriate forum to address the issue of new commitments for developing countries [...]. Brazil said that it hoped that negotiations on the second commitment period would take into account the 'Brazilian Proposal' based on the responsibility of having caused climate change’ (IISD, 2001: 13).

COP 8 (2002) - New Delhi, India

‘The usual division between the developed and developing countries’ positions on many issues was evident at COP 8 [...]. The Delhi Declaration reaffirms the development and eradication of poverty as top priorities in developing countries and the implementation of the Convention's commitments according to Parties' common but differentiated responsibilities, development priorities and circumstances. It does not call for a dialogue to broaden commitments’ (IISD, 2002: 1).

‘AOSIS [...] and Mexico noted that Annex I countries were not accomplishing their commitments and that their emissions were increasing. Considering this, they [...] questioned how some Annex I countries could propose that developing countries should make commitments to reduce emissions. [...] Venezuela [...] opposed starting a discussion on commitments for developing countries [...]. The
G-77/China opposed to any text that could imply new commitments for non-Annex I countries [...]. Claiming its right to develop, Cuba opposed to new commitments for developing countries’ (Ibid: 12).

**COP 10 (2004) - Buenos Aires, Argentina**

‘Long negotiations were held on the complex and sensitive issue of how the parties would get involved in making commitments to fight climate change in the post-2012 period. The Kyoto Protocol, according to its Article 3.9, requires that Parties should begin to consider the post-2012 period in year 2005[...]. Argentina proposed, and the Parties agreed, to incorporate a text stating that [...] the Seminar would not initiate any negotiations leading to new commitments for developing countries (IISD, 2004: 14).

**COP 11 (2005) - Montreal, Canada**

‘Reaffirming that no new commitments for non-Annex I Parties would be introduced under the Protocol, the G-77/China proposal called for the creation of an ad hoc working group to consider future commitments for Annex I countries’ (IISD, 2005: 13).

**COP 12 (2006) - Nairobi, Kenya**

‘It seems that the conditions for the participation of the main developing countries are not yet given (IISD, 2006: 17).

‘According to most observers, two issues must be solved first: historical emissions and the 'fair' (or acceptable) distribution of future emissions. In this context, the meaning of ‘fair’ will ultimately depend on political agreement. And, in any case, the only consensus at this point seems to be that there will be no possible commitments until developed countries show that they take seriously the idea of fighting climate change in the context of common but differentiated responsibilities’ (IISD, 2006: 20).

**COP 13 (2007) - Bali, Indonesia**

"The text on developed and developing countries' mitigation efforts was especially controversial [...]. While the United States, Canada and others sought stronger language to refer to developing countries’ commitments, the G-77/China opposed and, instead, tried to focus on language that referred to commitments for Annex I Parties [...]. The agreement did not seem possible, but then the Parties finally agreed on a proposal from India and another developing country on a text that refers to adequate mitigation actions at the national level to be implemented in developing Parties in the context of sustainable development, supported by technology transfer and possibly by financial flows and capacity building and developed in a way that could be measured, reported and verified’ (IISD, 2007: 15).

‘For the first time it established a negotiating agenda that included discussions on mitigation for both developed and developing countries (Ibid: 19).

**COP 14 (2008) - Poznan, Poland**

‘The Parties discussed the idea of establishing a registry of mitigation actions undertaken in developing countries. Brazil stated that the registry should match actions with needed and offered resources [...]. India stressed that there should not be reviews of the adequacy of developing countries’

**COP 15 (2009) - Copenhagen, Denmark**

‘It was agreed that non-Annex I parties will implement mitigation actions’ (IISD, 2009: 10)
‘A small number of developing countries, with Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua at the forefront, expressed strong objections to what they described as a ‘non-transparent and non-democratic’ negotiation process and quit the Copenhagen Accord’ (Ibid: 29).

**COP 16 (2010) - Cancun, Mexico**

‘The Mexican President of the COP [...] emphasised that the Cancun Conference is not the end but the beginning of a new phase of cooperation based on the conviction that everyone is responsible for the environment and the rest of humanity’ (IISD, 2010: 16).
‘Regarding the appropriate national mitigation actions of the developing country Parties, the COP agreed that they will carry out NAMAs in order to achieve a deviation in the expected emissions trajectories in 2020. It also agreed that developed countries will provide support for the preparation and implementation of NAMAs. A NAMA registry will be established to put together financial, technological and capacity-building support with NAMAs seeking international assistance’ (Ibid: 18).

**COP 17 (2011) - Durban, South Africa**

‘Bolivia expressed its concern because the requirements that are being imposed on developed and developing countries are very similar’ (IISD, 2011: 16).

**COP 18 (2012) - Doha, Qatar**

‘BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) said that […] group members promised a 'proactive approach' to deal with climate change in the future’ (IISD, 2012: 5).

**COP 19 (2013) - Warsaw, Poland**

‘Colombia, on behalf of AILAC, called for action within the framework of the respective capacities and taking into consideration the priorities of all parties […] (IISD, 2013: 14).
‘Regretting lack of ambition, Mexico emphasized its national efforts independently of an international agreement and the need to face actions without negotiating the future of the planet’ (Ibid: 27).
‘It seems that the 2015 agreement is resulting in a purely ‘bottom-up’ arrangement where each state delineates the scope and nature of its contribution […]. This leaves unresolved fundamental questions, such as the legal nature of the 2015 agreement and the means to differentiate commitments in an agreement ‘applicable to all’ (Ibid: 29).
Tunisia’s Institutional Change after the Revolution: Politics, Institutions and Change Agents

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Abstract

The Arab Uprisings started with the Tunisian revolution. These events brought the country to profound change, especially in its institutional asset. Relying on New Institutionalism theory and in particular on the Gradual Change Theory by Mahoney and Thelen, this paper analyses three fundamental dimensions of institutional change in order to establish which type of institutional change has occurred in post-revolution Tunisia. The paper looks at the characteristics of the institutions, the characteristics of the political context and the type of dominant change agent to determine the type of institutional change. In Tunisia, a low level of discretion in the interpretation of norms and rules, weak veto possibilities for the former regime supporters and an insurrection type of dominant change agent have resulted in a so-called “displacement” type of institutional change, where the removal of old rules is accompanied by the introduction of new ones.

Keywords

Gradual Change; Institutional Change; New Institutionalism; Tunisia; Tunisian Revolution
Introduction

The Arab Uprisings were initiated in Tunisia at the end of 2010 and evolved and spread across the whole Arab world the following year. Scholars still study the effects of these events at a global, regional and national level from many different perspectives. One of the most relevant consequences of the Uprisings has been the process of institutional change that has been undertaken in order to react to the protesters’ demands. Institutional change can occur to different degrees. Sometimes it entails a new set of institutions, sometimes institutions do not change but rules do. Understanding the type of institutional change in Tunisia can help disentangle all the other phenomena linked to this major event.

For these reasons, this paper aims to analyse Tunisia’s institutional change. Its driving question is: what kind of institutional change took place in Tunisia after the revolution? Building on a model of gradual institutional change, drawn from New Institutionalism theory, this paper analyses the characteristics of Tunisian institutions and political context and the type of dominant change agents in order to understand the features of the change that has occurred in the country. The claim is that the change that occurred Tunisia represents a sort of “displacement” (Mahoney and Thelen, 2010) with the removal of old rules and institutions and the introduction of new ones through the approval of the new constitution in 2014.

Literature Review

Tunisia is a semi-presidential Republic, where the President of the Republic is the Head of State and the Prime Minister, appointed by him, is the Head of Government. After independence in 1956, Tunisia had just two presidents, Habib Bourguiba (1959-1987) and ben Ali (1987-2011). Bourguiba ruled the country since independence in 1956, with a personal charismatic leadership. The socialist experiment was abandoned by 1970s, but the social agenda was still on the run, supported by a substantial economic growth in those years. Pro-western foreign policy was accompanied by a bureaucratization of the economy and the centrality of the Parti Socialiste Destourien1 (PSD).

In his book, Erdle (2010: 421) demonstrates how Ben Ali’s system was made up of people carefully picked by the President whose aim was not to reform Tunisia, but rather “to preserve and perpetuate the decisional and distributive monopoly of the established political order.” The system was based on a structure of patronage, where loyalty was fundamental to the leader’s power. Opposition parties accepted in that period to participate in the elections

1 Destourien means constitutional.
despite these were managed by the majority; in this way, they were able to enter in the parliament, anyhow they were too weak and fragmented to propose an effective opposition (Sassoon, 2017).

This political situation also explains the absence of the political parties during the 2011 protests that were led by Civil Society organizations and popular movements (Cavatorta and Haugbølle, 2012), and they appeared just after. The political parties previously repressed such as the islamists, along with many other civil society groups that proliferated with the revolution, were able to enter the political arena because of the new momentum brought about by the revolution. Competitive multi-party elections favoured the preparation for a national dialogue, fundamental for the reconstruction of the social and political tissue of the country and for the redefinition of the rules of the game. None of the politically relevant members of the Tunisian elites had the power to govern by himself, so this favoured a climate of dialogue and cooperation in order to avoid civil conflicts (Heydemann, 2016).

The revolution started in late 2010 with several spontaneous popular revolts in the south-eastern region and spread, after the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouaziz, across the whole country. The period after the fall of Ben Ali is seen by Zemni (2015: 2) as “as more than a legal and technical process of institution-building aimed at creating a new political system, and as more than the institutionalization of revolutionary demands”. The transition process represents a gradual shift “from the moment in which the people exercised – through mass mobilizations – its sovereignty directly to the moment in which political change became institutionalized” (Zemni, 2015: 3). In this phase, there is a dialectical tension between the “constitutional legality of the government and the revolutionary legitimacy of street politics […] with high levels of uncertainty and the spread of violence” (ibid.).

The set of events that brought forth the revolution and the institutional change of Tunisia has been the object of study of several scholars; I endeavour to systematically classify the type of institutional change that occurred based on this literature. To do so, a theoretical framework is proposed in the next section.

**Theoretical Framework**

New Institutionalism is a body of literature that has developed since the 1960s. While providing a complete literature review on the topic is an almost impossible, this section aims to highlight the most fundamental tools and concepts developed within New Institutionalism which can be useful for this paper’s purpose. New Institutionalist literature has produced three schools of thought: the rational choice, the sociological and the historical institutionalism.
Rational-choice institutionalism emerged from economic research that focused on behaviour. Its main assumption is that every individual seeks to maximize his/her own gain and does so rationally, by calculating the most convenient strategy (Shepsle and Weingast, 1987). Similarly, sociological institutionalism puts emphasis on the individual but from a different perspective. Considering cultural factors, the approach retains that institutions are not necessarily driven by efficiency but rather are the result of socio-cultural practices. Thirdly, historical institutionalism emphasizes how institutions matter, by looking closely at state and formal organizations. This approach conceives of institutions as the “the formal or informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions embedded in the organizational structure of the polity. […] In general, historical institutionalists associate institutions with organizations and the rules or conventions promulgated by formal organization” (Hall and Taylor, 1996: 6-7).

Given its emphasis on formal institutions, historical institutionalism is the most appropriate for the aims of this study, even though elements of analysis from the other two schools might be borrowed later in the analysis. This includes Mahoney and Thelen’s (2010) model to understand the types of institutional change. The model proposed is part of a wider theoretical framework, the Gradual Change Theory, which – inspired by New Institutionalism and belonging to its historical tradition – attempts to include in the analysis both endogenous and exogenous factors of institutional change. Indeed, these scholars underline how all types of institutionalist theories face problems in explaining institutional change: previous theories overrate the importance of exogenous shocks underestimating the role played by endogenous developments that gradually unfold inside the institutions. Mahoney and Thelen (2010) consider three main aspects which may shape the type of institutional change: the political context, characteristics of the institutions and type of dominant change agent. It is possible to identify the mode of institutional change based on these three dimensions. For each dimension, the authors ask a sub-question which brings them to identify four modal types of institutional change (shown in Table 1).

For the first dimension, the question concerns which level of discretion political actors detain in interpreting and implementing rules and norms; for the second dimension, the question concerns whether former regime supporters hold strong or weak veto possibilities; for the third dimension, the question concerns which the type of dominant change agent is. Following this typology, I will now gauge the different features of Tunisian institutional change, by analysing each dimension in order to finally classify the type of institutional change that has occurred in Tunisia after the Arab Uprisings.
Table 1. Types of Institutional Change and related characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institutional Change</th>
<th>Characteristics of the Institutions (Level of Discretion)</th>
<th>Characteristics of the Political Context (Veto Possibilities)</th>
<th>Type of Dominant Change Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Layering</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Subversive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Insurrectionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drift</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Symbionts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Opportunists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Elaborated by the author from Mahoney and Thelen (2010).

Methodology and Data

As the aim of this paper is to historically reconstruct the institutional change in Tunisia in order to interpret it based on the theoretical framework discussed earlier, the methodology adopted is Process Tracing (PT). PT has been developed by historians, comparatists and case study scholars; its aim is to get an in-depth understanding of a case study and how certain outcomes have been produced by using a within-case inference. PT focuses on the mechanisms of causality and effect within a single case. Its purpose is to explain how an outcome has been produced by looking at its process.

Van Evera (1997: 64) underlines that in PT “the cause-effect link that connects independent variable and outcome is unwrapped and divided into smaller steps; then the investigator looks for observable evidence of each step.” The author finds three variants of PT that can be distinguished based on their purpose. The first one is theory-testing: this kind of PT wants to look at whether the causal mechanism is present and if it works as theorized. A second one is a theory-building PT which looks at what is the causal mechanism between the dependent and independent variables to induce a plausible hypothetical causal mechanism. Both these variants of PT are theory-centric, while a third variant, Explaining Outcome Process Tracing (EOPT), is more case-centric. EOPT seeks to find the causes of a particular outcome. The ambition is to find a minimal sufficient explanation of a particular outcome that accounts for all its important aspects. For this paper, EOPT is used to unpack the events in order to understand institutional change.

Applying PT is not an easy task and further considerations are necessary. First, it is important to trace all the events that occurred in the considered process. This means that it will be necessary to investigate all the interactions between the considered actors that brought about the institutional change of Tunisia after the revolution. Thus, it will be essential to start by dividing the sets of events into smaller components. After that, every single part will be
analysed through the use of descriptive inference which answers the question of what happened between X and Y in a form of narrative, unpacking the events into smaller observable steps. These smaller observable steps are the factors which explain the different outcomes of the institutional change process.

As we are mainly dealing with qualitative data, and in particular historical data, their main source is secondary literature. Following the division suggested by the theoretical framework, the paper subsequently goes into deeper analysis by discussing the context, actors and events of the Tunisian revolution.

**Characteristics of the Institutions in Tunisia**

Firstly, an understanding of the characteristics of Tunisian institutions is fundamental: do the targeted institutions afford political actors with opportunities for exercising discretion in the interpretation or enforcement of norms and decisions? This section will show that because of weak opposition, constitutional rigidity, political control and repression as well as the penetration of the party in the state apparatus, Tunisian institutions show a low level of discretion available for political actors in the interpretation and enforcement of norms and decisions.

Ben Ali's regime was secure and seemed to be politically stable and as the first president, Ben Ali is today still considered as the father of the country; his image has had an influence in Tunisian politics for decades. President Habib Bourguiba was deposed by then-Prime Minister Ben Ali in 1987 following the so-called medical coup d’état when, on the basis of Article 56 of the constitution, Ben Ali asked some doctors to declare the Bourguiba unfit for office due to health problems. This bloodless coup made Ben Ali welcomed by the population, but the hopes for more political openness were soon betrayed. Ben Ali continued the policies of secularism and gender equality of the previous president but was unable to cope with the economic problems of the country, such as young graduates’ unemployment, lack of prospects and the position of the country in the world economy. Corruption and nepotism become traits of the regimes, along with the concentration of power in Ben Ali’s family (Schiller, 2011).

Constitutionalism has been a fundamental character of Tunisian institutions since 1860 when it had its first Arab constitution. Constitutionalism favoured separation of powers, at least until independence when Bourguiba’s *Neo-Destour* party established its political dominance within the system with the constitutional reform of 1959. Nonetheless, the coup of 1987 was made possible following constitutional rules, as it was justified on the basis of Article 56. Similarly, in 2011, the transition followed constitutional rules, as
Gannouchi’s attempt to overtake the constitution was promptly stopped by legal means. This historical legacy of institutionalism is relevant to the political transition of Tunisia, alongside elements of the old regime such as patterns of corruption, patrimonial behaviours and elements of distrust towards institutions (Murphy, 2013).

When Ben Ali took the power in 1987, he maintained the status quo and expanded his control over society and state institutions. The Destour party was changed into the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique (RCD) and Ben Ali has never separated the party from the state. The electoral democracy that he created afterwards was just another example of managed elections where loyal opposition was allowed to participate. No genuine political reform has taken place in Tunisia and real political opponents were not allowed to participate or speak up. The state was also controlling economy in order to foster political control over the population and Ben Ali’s popularity (Sadiki, 2002). However, episodes of revolt have taken place during Ben Ali’s regime, despite the centralized state having created mechanisms of co-optation of the young generation in order to control them and foster national identity through programs of public administration employment (Paciello and Pioppi, 2018). He started economic restructuring (until the end of 1990s) by introducing neoliberal reforms that include abolishing price control and state subsidies as well as fostering privatization. Ben Ali also promised political reforms and at the beginning he allowed the legalization of some parties. However, these parties were those that had not challenged the regime. In the meantime, the regime created a new image of itself by renaming the PSD as the Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique (RCD). Islamist parties were not legalized, as they were seen as a threat to the regime and secularism. However, episodes of repression were present (Murphy, 1997). The regime, since 1987, has always maintained a tight control by using mechanisms of co-optation of opposition figures instead of attacking them directly. Ben Ali and the RCD party enjoyed wide popular support in the beginning (1987) and the dictator invited many figures of the opposition to join the party or be candidates on its party lists. With the election of 1989, the RCD became more repressive, as the ministerial appointments made by Ben Ali can attest. Likewise, at the local level, security was reinforced in order to strengthen political control. The party started to expand into all sectors of the state, from universities to public companies and administrative bodies. However, from 2002, the increased personal power of Ben Ali saw him concentrating power in the hands of his family members and closest lobbies. At the same time, he modified the constitution in order to allow the President to rule for more than two terms. This created frustration and internal

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2 Constitutional Democratic Rally.
dissent in the party. Some scholars consider this dissent a factor for the fall of Ben Ali, because RCD was not supportive enough of its leader after the outbreak of protests (Wolf, 2017). Ben Ali’s attempts at reforms in terms of press freedom, freedom of speech and freedom of association were disappointing. Legal opposition was weak and not credible. The RCD members in the Parliament were very abiding, making it almost impossible for opposition and the same majority’s members to emend laws; in general, the legislative branch was quite weak in relation to the executive power, being subordinated to the party-state apparatus (Angrist, 1999).

After Ben Ali left Tunisia in January 2011, the then-Prime Minister Mohamed Gannouchi tried to appoint himself as President of the Republic on the basis of Article 56 of the constitution (Murphy, 2011) in an attempt to repeat the famous coup d’état medical that Ben Ali had previously done towards Habib Bourguiba. But the Constitutional Council, just a few hours after, condemned this attempt and the President of the Tunisian Parliament Fouad Mebazaa⁴ was nominated President according to the constitutional reading of Article 57, during the transitional period that would have brought to the new elections within 45 and 60 days. The new parliamentary elections were held in October 2014 and the presidential election on 23 November 2014. In December 2014, Beji Caid Essebsi⁵ from the secularist Nidaa Tounes party was elected as the new President of Tunisia, in alternation to the moderate islamist party Ennahda.

The systematic repression and the lack of freedom of expression weakened the opposition forces during the whole of Ben Ali’s regime. The legal opposition had no influence over the regime’s agenda. Social policy was used as a means to maintain legitimacy and control even during economic structural adjustments (Paciello and Pioppi 2018). All these elements underline the low level of discretion that political actors enjoyed in Tunisia during Ben Ali’s regime. The weak opposition, constrained by constitutional rigidity and tight political control, was repressed for decades. At the same time, with the penetration of the state into sectors of the economy and the state, it hampered any attempt by any political actor to promote any change during period of Ben Ali’s rule.

**Characteristics of the Political Context in Tunisia**

Second, an analysis of the characteristics of the political context of Tunisia is necessary to disentangle the institutional change that resulted in the wake of the Arab

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³ About the temporary unavailability of the President of the Republic.
⁴ Both of them, Mebazaa and Mohamed Gannouchi, were persons close to the former dictator Ben Ali.
⁵ Former Minister of Foreign Affairs under Habib Bourguiba and Prime Minister in 2011 after Ben Ali’s departure.
Uprisings. The question here is whether the supporters of the former regime enjoyed strong or weak veto possibilities. The proliferation of parties and civil society organizations, the consequent multi-partitism that originated (despite the dominance of two major parties, and the prohibition to former regime supporters to run as candidates in the election outline a political context where supporters of the former regime enjoys very weak veto possibilities. The introduction of a new democratic constitution also reinforces the plurality of the system and weakens veto possibilities of detractors.

While widespread corruption, coercion and authoritarianism defined the whole of Ben Ali’s period, his party was hegemonic, other opposition organization had little space of manoeuvre. Moreover, the 2008 bill on presidential candidates stipulated that a candidate has to be leader of a party for at least two years. This excluded many opposition leaders from candidature. Tunisia claimed to have a multi-party system, but, in fact, the main party of the post-colonial period was the Neo-Destour, renamed Constitutional Socialist Party (Parti Socialiste Destourien) in 1964 and Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique (RCD – Constitutional Democratic Rally) in 1989.

The majority of parties were founded and recognized only after the revolution, with the exception of the secular-leftist DFLL (Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties) and the PDP (Progressive Democratic Party) (Çarkoğlu et al. 2018). In Tunisia, opposition cooperation happened pre- and post- elections with the formation of electoral alliances (even though a deeper analysis suggests a stronger ideological divide among opposition parties) (Lust, 2011). During Ben Ali’s regime, Tunisian opposition failed to confront the regime not only because of the repression, but also because of the lack of coordination among the forces, their ideological differences and the personal rivalries of their leaders. Islamist parties such as Ennahda had been for long repressed by Bourguiba’s regime first and later Ben Ali’s regime. Since 1980 till the fall of Ben Ali’s regime, the relationship has been confrontational and conflictual, despite Ennahda representing a moderate islamist party that is different from the Salafist movements that rose in North Africa (Allani, 2009). Ben Ali was unable to co-opt this opposition party and thus then he decided to ban the party and promoted controlled elections where the RCD was able to win the majority. In the first post-revolution elections however, Ennahda won the majority, thanks also to the lack of complicity with the previous regime (Hinnebusch, 2015).

In the post-Ben Ali era, two of the major parties who are competing for power in Tunisia are the moderate islamist Ennahda and the counter-coalition Nidaa Tounes. The latter gathers seculars, some of the remnants of the old ruling party and components of the trade
union movement. They favoured the dialogue during the transitional period, by avoiding ideological polarization and believing in the new political and electoral system (Hinnebusch, 2017). The political arena in this period was characterized by competition and compromise, especially between the two major actors *Ennahda* and *Nidaa Tounes*. The bargained competition among them prevented the institutionalization of rules and configured a space of action that is outside the normal institutional rules. They monopolized the political arena, preventing more political inclusiveness and re-channeled revolutionary demands into a reductive form of party pluralism, where islamist confront some former regime representatives. At the beginning of the revolution, opposition parties and civil society movements were not on the same line as to whether to cooperate with former members of the regime or to continue with the revolution; *Ennahda* pushed for the marginalization of the loyalists but at the same time bargained with them.

*Ennahda* and *CPR* were then successful in their proposal in prohibiting the candidature of former RCD top officials in the 2011 elections. This is according to Article 15 of the proportional electoral law, which states that all senior executives of the RCD party and those who supported publicly the candidature of Ben Ali in 2009 were forbidden to run in the elections. *Nidaa Tounes*, which represents a heterogeneous group of secularist people – some of whom were former supporters of the regime – supported the choice. With the assassination of the second leader Mohamed Brahmi of the Popular Front in July 2014, *Nidaa Tounes* was able to pressure *Ennahda*’s government to resign. However, the bargained competition between these two main political actors has not brought about a compromise on the rules of the game but has instead led to a strong polarization in the political debate. This polarization of the Tunisian political system could however block access to politics for many other social actors and jeopardize transparency and accountability of institutions (Boubeker, 2016).

The process of constitution-making started in March 2011, two months after Ben Ali left the country. The figures at the forefront of these events, who are no longer in Tunisian politics, had a long-lasting effect on the process. The process was also pushed by protests in the streets. Politicians and administrators in Tunisia all belong to the same elite group, possessing similar education and service. Despite maintaining control over state apparatus and institutions during the period of transition, they disengaged from the previous regime and negotiated an honourable way out and a new role in post-revolutionary Tunisia (Parolin, 2015). Thus, the political context after the 2011 revolution is characterized by a presence of several parties and civil society organizations that compete through elections in order to gain
the power to govern. Along with the exclusion of top officials of the former regime from the elections, these two characteristics describe a political context where the veto possibilities for the former supporters of the regime are weak, since the democratic change enshrined by the introduction of the new constitution in 2014 stabilized a plural feature of Tunisian politics.

Change Agents in Tunisia

A third step to uncover the type of institutional change that resulted in Tunisia after the Arab Uprising is to understand what type of dominant change agent there was. According to the framework adopted by Mahoney and Thelen (2010), two questions can help identify the type of dominant change agent: do these agents seek to preserve institutions and do they respect existing institutional rules? By answering these two questions, it is possible to identify four different types of change agents:

1. Insurrectionaries: does not want to preserve institution nor follow institutional rules;
2. Symbionts: seek to preserve institutions without following institutional rules;
3. Subversives: follow the rules of institutions but do not want to preserve them;
4. Opportunists: may or may not follow the rules and preserve the institutions.

In the case of Tunisia, the answer to both questions is negative. The dominant change agents in Tunisia were not willing to preserve the institutions (they even created new ones) and in doing so they did not follow the existing institutional rules but adopted extra institutional rules such as revolts which sometimes included episodes of violence.

The main actors involved in the revolution were youth and labour movements which had socio-democratic demands, such as fighting against unemployment and liberal neopatrimonial regimes (Hanafi, 2012). The Trade Union UGGT quickly mobilized a lot of people in order to overthrow the regime of Ben Ali and afterwards played the role of mediator between all the political parties and civil society organizations to favour the transition (Cavatorta, 2015). Collective mobilization has been relevant since the 2008 protests in Gafsa; in the wake of the 2011 uprising, collective mobilization was able to exert political influence on the elites and institutions through conflictual action. However, the revolutionary character of these movements was insufficient to grant them legitimacy over the whole transition and with the election in 2014, the demands of protesters were in the end channelled into the political and institutional system (Antonakis-Nashif, 2016).

On 20 January 2011, one week after the departure of Ben Ali, opposition forces created the 14' January Front “that saw itself as the only legitimate authority to speak in the name of the people and opposed the transition from above that the legal government was
proposing. For the Front, the usage of article 57 of the constitution constrained the possibilities for political change too much” (ibid, p.4). According to them, 60 days would have been too short a period for organizing free and fair elections and there was the risk of a personalization of presidential power, especially within the same constitutional boundaries and the same parliament as Ben Ali’s rule. For these reasons, the Front requested the dissolution of Ben Ali’s party, the RCD, and of the two chambers of the parliament in order to elect a National Constituent Assembly. Street protests supported these actions and at the end of the month, the RCD ministers resigned from the government.

The desire to radically change the institutional setting was supported by mass demonstrations and extra-institutional movements that, in the informal public political space, represented the insurrectionary character of the change agents in Tunisia. They introduced a tension between the legality of the system and the revolutionary legitimacy, refusing to follow the existing institutional rules that would be contrary to the aims of the revolution. The attempt to concentrate the powers of the chambers into the hands of the President, as proposed by Prime Minister Mohamed Gannouchi due to the deteriorated security situation in the country, had the only effect of inciting the popular protest, which in discord with the idea of a controlled transition led by the government, gathered in the Conseil National de protection de la Révolution (CNPR, National Council for the Protection of the revolution). This body grouped the 14 January Front, the Bar Association, human rights organizations and the UGTT. The islamists too joined the 14th January Front and the Council formed by the Front, that was recognized by the interim government despite some reluctance. The recognition of the CNPR by the government was a necessary step to re-channel into an institutional setting the initiative, which clearly did not follow the usual institutional rules.

However, protests continued till February 2011, when Prime Minister Mohammed Gannouchi proposed as provincial governors 19 out of 24 former members of the RCD party. On March 3, the President announced the elections for the new constitutional assembly and abrogated the Tunisian constitution by passing the Law Decree n.14 on the provisional organization of public authorities. With this, the institutional setting of Ben Ali’s Tunisia started to collapse. The process would finish with the approval of the new constitution in 2014. These events show that change agents in Tunisia did not want to preserve the previous institutions and were ready to achieve these results by going against the existing institutional rules.

According to Mahoney and Thelen (2010), these change agents are classified as insurrectionaries. After the Law Decree n.14, a new institution was created in order to
organize the next elections after the revolution, the Haute Instance pour la réalisation des objectifs de la révolution, des réformes politiques et de la transition démocratique (High Authority for the realization of the objectives of the revolution, for political reforms and democratic transition, or High Authority). This represents a further step in the process of institutional change: the removal of existing rules with the introduction of new ones. This corresponds to the displacement type of institutional change. Similarly, the modification of the old bicameral parliament, with the introduction of the NCA first and the unicameral Assembly of Representatives later, reinforces this reading of the institutional change process in Tunisia. Recently, the High Authority also created the ISIE (Instance Supérieure Indépendent pour les élections), the Superior Independent Instance for the Elections, to be in-charge of supervising the new elections.

The assassination of the Member of the Parliament (MP) Mohamed Brahmi in July 2013 opened a political crisis in Tunisia. This concerns the electoral legitimacy of the National Constituent Assembly and the Troika Government (Ben Salem, 2015). The latter ruled after the elections in 2011 of the NCA and was formed by the islamist Ennahda party, the secular centre-left party Congress for the Republic (CPR, Congrè pour la République) and the social democratic party Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (FDTL, Forum démocratique pour le travail et les libertés, also known as Ettakatol). The crisis was solved with the constitution of the National Dialogue (ND) composed by the Quartet that was awarded with the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2015: the UGTT, Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens, the Tunisian General Labour Union; the UTICA, Union Tunisienne de l’Industrie, du Commerce et de l’Artisanat, the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts; the LTDH, Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l’Homme, the Tunisian Human Rights Ligue; and the National Bar Association, the Conseil de l’Ordre des Avocat (COA). This Quartet was able to set the rules of the political arena through an agreement (a road map) signed for the organization of the elections. In the meantime, the moderate social-democratic secular party Nidaa Tounes (Call for Tunisia) emerged as an alternative for government to the Ennahda, and the Popular Front Front Populaire (FP) was relegated to the opposition. Indeed, in the elections of 2014, the Popular Front did not receive enough votes and along with its intransigence it could not become a potential ally for any party. The new political alliance was formed by Ennahda, Nidaa Tounes and Afek Tounes (a centre-right secular party).

However, new elections were held only in October 2011 and not for the renewal of the Tunisian Parliament (which before 2011 was a bicameral one), but for the election of a National Constituent Assembly and the President of the Tunisian Republic. The human
rights activist of the Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme and founder of the political party Congrès pour la République Mancef Marzouki, became the president and remained in power until December 2013. The NCA was then dissolved and replaced by the new unicameral Parliament (Assembly of the Representatives of the People) on 26 October 2014 after the new constitution was adopted in the month of January of the same year.

The events of the revolution and those subsequent to it which constitute the transition of Tunisia to democracy illustrates that the dominant change agent, represented by popular movements and civil society organizations, had an insurrectionary character. They challenged the whole political process throughout threats of revolts and also created new bodies, such as the Council for the Protection of the revolution, in order to change the institutions and defend their demands. Doing this through an extra-parliamentary activity as well as with episodes of violence (including the assassination of two political leaders) describe the change agents as insurrectionaries which, in the end, the political system was able to absorb even though minor protests are always present in Tunisia. With this last step, the circle is complete in order to classify the type of institutional change that has occurred in Tunisia.

Conclusion

This paper analysed Tunisia’s institutional change using an institutionalist approach, in particular the analytical framework from Gradual Change Theory. In order to understand institutional change, three dimensions have been taken into consideration: the characteristics of the institutions (with their level of discretion in interpreting and implementing rules and norms), the characteristics of the political context (with the related force of the veto possibilities for the supporters of the former regime) and the type of dominant change agents, the latter identified by considering whether the dominant change agents seek to preserve institution and/or follow the rules of the institution.

The analysis of the institutional change in Tunisia after the Arab Uprisings has uncovered a displacement type of institutional layering. Table 2 summarizes all the elements necessary for the classification of institutional change in the Tunisian case.

As for the characteristics of the institution, Tunisia reveals a low level of discretion in interpreting and implementing rules and norms; this is due to the penetration of the party in the state, the political control and repression used during the former regime, a weak opposition and a strong rigidity of the constitution which do not allow for more room of action in the institutional context. However, when looking at the characteristics of the political context, this paper finds weak veto possibilities for the former regime supporters.
This is due to a new constitution and the decision of excluding former top officials of the RCD party from candidature in the elections. Moreover, the proliferation of parties and civil society organizations helped promote a strong multi-party system.

Finally, this paper looked at the type of dominant change agents in Tunisia. Because change agents did not want to preserve institutions, they promoted methods of opposition that have not followed the former institutional rules. These two elements, along with the fact that insurrectionaries promoted the creation of new institutions, delineate the type of dominant change agent as insurrectionaries.

In conclusion, a low level of discretion in the institutional context, weak veto possibilities for the former regime supporters in the political context and the presence of insurrectionaries as dominant change agent describe the type of institutional change in Tunisia as displacement. This finding helps us to disentangle not only which type of institutional change has occurred in Tunisia, but even who have been the relevant actors. Moreover, the results contribute to widen the knowledge of the national peculiarity of Tunisia and might be useful for any comparative research who takes into account different countries of the region. In particular, the evidences seem to underline how Arab Uprisings, despite sharing common features, have been singular from one country to another: further research should be directed to understand the specificities of the institutional changes occurred in the other countries of the region, as they are deemed fundamental to understand regional specificities and dynamics.

Table 2. Type of Institutional Change and Related Characteristics in Tunisia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUNISIA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the Institutions</td>
<td>LOW</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Level of discretion)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Penetration of the party in the state</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Political control and repression</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Weak opposition and constitutional rigidity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the Political Context</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Veto Possibilities)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exclusion of former RCD top official from</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>candidature</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Proliferation of parties and civil society</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New constitution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Dominant Change Agent</td>
<td>INSURRECTIONARIES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Do not want to preserve institutions (create new ones)
• Do not follow institutional rules (revolts, episodes of violence)

**Type of Institutional Change**

| DISPLACEMENT |

Source: Author

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**References**


Polytropic Socrates’ Implicit Defence of Philosophy: Lying, Justice, and Sophistry in Plato’s Lesser Hippias

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Abstract

This article offers an interpretation of Plato’s Lesser Hippias, containing several original claims. First, it contends that the dialogue takes place in front of an unnamed audience composed of Socrates’ students and the dialogue is therefore for their benefit, not that of Hippias or Eudicus. It then argues that Socrates juxtaposes himself to Hippias to show the superiority of philosophy to sophistry. Finally, this article claims that the central argument of the dialogue is a means to demonstrate Socrates’ superior understanding of justice, for he is able to tell the truth on the matter as well as lie, showing mastery of both philosophy and sophistry. These assertions demonstrate the importance of the Lesser Hippias in the broader Platonic corpus.

Keywords

Hippias; Justice; Plato; Political Philosophy; Socrates; Sophists
Introduction

The *Lesser Hippias* is often regarded as the least important of Plato’s dramatic dialogues on Socrates (de Laguna, 1920: 550—551). Its argument initially appears simple and inconclusive, leading some to disregard the work as irrelevant to Plato’s broader teachings and to discount its philosophic contribution to the corpus (de Laguna, 1920: 550; Alexander, 2008: 6fn7). However, there are several aspects of the dialogue that remain widely unexamined, such as its dramatic setting and the conclusions that arise from that setting. After a brief recapitulation of the argument of the dialogue, I argue that Socrates uses the argument of the *Lesser Hippias* to offer a dramatic teaching for his students, who are unnamed, but present at this dialogue. Through this Socrates shows the superiority of the philosophic way of life to that of the sophist by contrasting himself and the sophist Hippias. Further, Socrates shows that he is the most knowledgeable man on justice because he is the one most capable of telling the truth *and* lying on a given subject. Thus explaining the otherwise contradictory nature of the dialogue’s argument when compared to other Socratic teachings.

Socrates regularly proves to his students that he knows more about justice than any other man; the *Lesser Hippias* broadens this effort, as he demonstrates that he is also most capable of lying about the nature of the good and just man (*LH* 375e). Therefore, the dialogue’s central focus is not voluntary and involuntary wrong, but the differences between the philosopher and the sophist--Socrates and Hippias—-as demonstrated through their own actions as well as through the references to Achilles and Odysseus. As Davis puts it, “Hippias…believes it is possible for Achilles to appear as simple and for him to appear as Achilles” (Davis, 2016: 8). Socrates contorts the argument to degrade the famous sophist in the presence of Socrates’ own students and elevate his students’ appreciation of his own, Odysseus-like, wily soul. Socrates’ sophistry, though it might appear hypocritical, emerges as a demonstration on the dangers of sophistry for Socrates’ true audience. Neither Hippias nor Eudicus detect Socrates’ teachings on the soul and himself, but the dialogue was not for the benefit of either of these men. For these reasons the *Lesser Hippias* emerges as a dialogue pregnant with significance for Socrates’ students; more broadly, it stands as an important part of the Socratic teaching and as a confirmation of Socrates’ knowledge.

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1 For the *Lesser Hippias*, unless noted, I rely on James Leake’s 1987 translation. For the *Greater Hippias*, David R. Sweets’ 1987. These English translations will be referenced as *LH*, and *GH*. The Greek I rely on is Burnet's 1903 accessed through Perseus online.
Argument and Action of the *Lesser Hippias*

*Dramatic Introduction (363a—364a)*

As demonstrated in the opening, the philosopher, Socrates, is slow to approach the sophist, Hippias. The dialogue opens with Eudicus asking Socrates why he does not engage Hippias following Hippias’ speech. Eudicus exhorts Socrates to question Hippias because the many have left, leaving only a small group who “claim to share in the pursuit of philosophy” (*LH* 363a). Hippias assures the assembled that he will answer because when he speaks at the Olympic festivals, he answers all questions his audience may give him on his prepared subjects. He thinks that it is impossible for Socrates to question him in any problematic way given his vast experience and the public recognition he had received for his speeches. To this Socrates says Hippias is blessed if his confidence in his soul and wisdom at the Olympics are as he claims, for it would be greater than any of the athletes there with their bodies. Hippias claims his confidence is based on him never meeting “anyone better than [he] in anything” (*LH* 364a).

*Presentation of the Argument (364b—365c)*

Socrates begins the discussion by asking: is Achilles or Odysseus better, in which respects, and what are the reasons for Hippias’ distinctions? Hippias replies, “Homer represented Achilles as the best man of those who came to Troy…and Odysseus as the wiliest” (*LH* 364c). Socrates seeks clarification on what Hippias means by “wily,” asking if Homer also represented Achilles as wily. Hippias insists that Achilles was not wily but simple; he references Achilles’ response to Odysseus in the *Iliad*, in which Odysseus is trying to convince Achilles to re-join the battle and has offered incentives for his return (*Iliad* IX.308—314). Achilles responds bitterly to Odysseus, accusing him of being deceptive with his words and intentions, something Achilles despises. Hippias claims that this passage shows Achilles to be “truthful and simple” and Odysseus to be “wily and lying” (*LH* 365b). Socrates then suggests that Hippias’ definition of wily is: “the wily man is a liar” (*LH* 365c). Hippias agrees to this and they both further agree to Socrates’ claim that, “it seemed to Homer that the truthful man is one sort and the liar another, and they are not the same” (*LH* 365c).

As the argument opens, Hippias’ preference for Achilles emerges. Despite his traditional view as a hero, Hippias favours Achilles for his simplicity, a trait not often

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2 Following Alexander, I depart from Leake’s translation of *polytropos* as “versatile” and instead I will use her translation of “wily” throughout (Alexander, 2008: 22 fn6).
considered complimentary. Yet here, he gladly attributes it to Achilles and himself, both of whom he considers champions.

**Discussion on Liars (365d—368a)**

Hippias is next led by Socrates to agree that liars are: “capable of doing many things, particularly deceiving people”; “wily and deceiving…by unscrupulous wickedness…and by prudence”; “they know very well [what they do and] that is why they do evil”; they are “wise with respect to…deceiving thoroughly” (*LH* 365e). They summarize, “liars are capable, prudent, knowing, and wise in those things in which they are liars” and “the truthful and the liars are different and most opposite to one another” (*LH* 366a). The liars then know they are lying and those who are ignorant of such things cannot lie (*LH* 366b).

Socrates shifts the conversation towards the examination of Hippias as a calculator. They determine that because Hippias is the most capable and the wisest calculator, he is also the best. They conclude that the one who is most capable of lying about calculations is also the one who is the most capable of telling the truth about calculations and “the one who is good at these things [is] the expert calculator” (*LH* 367c). They then apply the same argument to Hippias as a geometer and astronomer and come to the same conclusions; because Hippias is the wisest in these subjects, their argument suggests that he is also the most capable liar and therefore a liar. This undermines Hippias’ claims to simplicity.

**Socrates’ First Speech (368b—369d)**

Socrates continues this examination of Hippias and asserts that all of these things are true in regards to all the sciences and Hippias is “altogether the wisest of all human beings in the greatest number of arts” (*LH* 368b). In the presence of his students, Socrates seeks to elevate himself while diminishing the perception of Hippias—and sophists more generally. He uses his first speech of the *Lesser Hippias* to mock and diminish Hippias’ claim to wisdom, thus undermining sophistry’s legitimacy. Socrates recounts that Hippias’ boasts “in the marketplace beside the banking tables” about what he wore when he went to the temple of Zeus, god of oaths, at Olympus (*LH* 368b). Socrates contrasts himself and his wisdom of the soul to Hippias’ claim to wisdom based on external adornments and personal wealth as a sophist (*GH* 282d). Socrates mentions Hippias’ rings and shoes, in silent contrast to Socrates’ simple clothes and bare feet (*Memorabilia* 1.6.5—7). Socrates mocks Hippias’ boastful account of his tunic, which he wove himself (a skill usually practiced exclusively by women). Hippias also claims to carry a scraper and unguent for oil, the usual accessories of an athlete—one who is skilled in a physical art, not a mental art, as Hippias claims to be. And Socrates recounts that the “most unusual” or “most absurd” thing Hippias wears is an
imitation of an expensive Persian belt that Hippias had plaited himself; belts, or ϖόνε, were traditionally worn only by women and were a mark of femininity (LH 368c). Not only does Socrates note that this belt is the “most unusual” piece in his collection, but ironically it is also “a display of the greatest wisdom” (LH 368c). Following Socrates’ critique of Hippias’ physical adornments, Socrates comments on the numerous poems and speeches that Hippias brought with him (LH 368d). In this, Socrates is careful to note that Hippias wore or brought all of these things; none are attributed as characteristics of his soul. Further, Socrates notes that he had nearly forgotten about Hippias’ “artful device…for remembering,” which is what Hippias supposes to be his “most splendid” adornment, yet, this best possession of Hippias soon fails him in the discussion when he claims confusion at Socrates suggested return to the previous argument (LH 368d, 369a).

Following Socrates’ mockery of Hippias’ adornments, in an attempt to return to the discussion of Odysseus and Achilles, Hippias implores Socrates to respond with a proper speech in order that “these people here will know more fully who speaks better” (LH 369c). His embarrassment apparent, Hippias wishes for the discussion to continue in a manner in which he feels he can prove his superiority; Hippias wants to return to sophistic refutations based in Homer. More importantly, Hippias’ request reminds the reader of the audience before whom this dialogue is occurring. Hippias is calling on the silent audience to make the final judgment on who “more fully speaks better” (LH 369c).

**Homeric Sophistry (369e—371e)**

In response, Socrates presents passages from the *Iliad* in which he claims Achilles is portrayed as a liar. At one point, Achilles tells Odysseus that he intends to leave the next day instead of assisting the Achaeans; Socrates also cites Achilles’ earlier threat to leave peremptorily (*Iliad* IX.357—63, I.169—1). Socrates here emphasises that in neither situation did Achilles ever begin to mobilize his ships despite telling both his comrades and the army that he intended to leave. Where Socrates suggests that the difference between Achilles and Odysseus is indistinguishable; Hippias counters that Achilles lies involuntarily, out of compulsion and necessity, whereas Odysseus lies voluntarily, from design. Socrates asserts

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3 When looking at the works of Plato and Homer, ϖόνε is used in reference to women in *Alcibiades* 1 123b; *Odyssey* at 5.233, 10.545, 11.245; *Iliad* 14.181. It is used in reference to men only in *Iliad* 2.479, 11.234.

4 The word ἀτόποτατον is the superlative form of the adjective ἀτόπος, which means extraordinary, but also strange, odd, eccentric, unnatural, and disgusting. Further, while mocking his source of identity in physical adornments, Socrates also discounts Hippias’ Greekness by showing that his most prominent piece of clothing was in the style of the Persians, and Persian women at that. To be accused of Persianness is to be not only anti-Greek but to be slavish and effeminate; the Persians were looked down upon as barbarians, their leaders tyrannical and Persian subjects were little more than slaves.
in opposition that Achilles lied voluntarily with design, more prudently than Odysseus because his lies avoided detection by Odysseus, or at least “Odysseus says nothing to [Achilles] that shows he perceived he was lying” (LH 371a). Socrates recounts another time when Achilles said one thing and acted in another way: he tells Ajax that he wouldn’t fight until Hector arrived at his ships, neglecting to mention his plans to sail away as he had denied to Odysseus earlier (Iliad IX.650—55). Socrates asserts that this claim, which stands in contradiction to Achilles’ earlier ones, proves the intentionality of his lies and also shows how Achilles viewed Odysseus as “someone of primitive simplicity” because of his readiness to lie and contradict himself after “he had railed against imposters with the most extreme abuse” (LH 371d). Hippias responds that Achilles is guileless and for that reason spoke differently to each, without design, whereas when “Odysseus speaks the truth he always speaks by design, and whenever he lies it is the same” (LH 371c). Socrates then declares that Odysseus is better than Achilles; Hippias disagrees.

**Voluntary and Involuntary Evil, and Socrates’ Second Speech (372a—373c)**

Hippias objects to Socrates’ claim that those who are voluntarily unjust are better than those who are involuntarily unjust, arguing that there is more forgiveness for a person who does evil unknowingly and laws are harsher towards those who do evil knowingly. Socrates now expresses his need to question Hippias, the “best of men,” because Socrates knows nothing and wishes to learn (LH 373b). Though admitting that his opinion on the question at hand vacillates, Socrates maintains his opinion that those who go wrong voluntarily are better than those who do so involuntarily; he only maintains this position reluctantly, giving many concessions to the hesitant Hippias. Socrates’ opinion, which contradicts his famous and oft-repeated public position, finds basis in their previous agreement that those who are wretched act involuntarily.

Partly because of Socrates’ mocking account of the items that Hippias identifies as his source of wisdom, Hippias becomes reluctant to continue talking with Socrates and only through the intervention of Eudicus does he agree to continue (LH 373b). Socrates moves to flatter Hippias in order to keep him engaged and the discussion shifts from wondering if it is the mark of the expert in anything to tell the truth and lie about the given subject, to the question of whether it is the mark of a good thing to err voluntarily or involuntarily. Here

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5 Socrates does not mention here that Odysseus was also present at the exchange between Achilles and Ajax (Iliad IX 624—57).
6 Socrates’ claim here stands in contradiction with his later teaching in the Gorgias, in which Socrates argues that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong.
Hippias emerges as Achilles, bitterly upset with the deceptive Odysseus, Socrates. ⁷ Appeasing Hippias, Socrates claims that if this is so, it is involuntary and he should be forgiven, per their argument.

**Who is Better? (373c—374e)**

Socrates and Hippias now transition into an investigation of “whether those are better who go wrong voluntarily or those who do so involuntarily” (LH 373c). They begin by examining the runner. They agree that he who runs well, and runs quickly, is good, and he who runs slowly involuntarily is bad. A good runner is then capable of voluntarily running quickly and slowly. They apply the same principles to wrestling and every other use of the body; he who is capable of voluntarily acting both good and bad in respect to their sport, is the better. Through more examples, they determine that it is desirable to act with an inclination towards the bad voluntarily rather than involuntarily; the two, attribute virtue to the capacity one has to demonstrate capability at any given skill of the body—good or bad (LH 374e).

**Good and Bad Souls (375a—375c)**

Socrates then redirects the discussion to which is the better souled horse and they agree that it is the one which will voluntarily ride badly. The horse that “would do voluntarily the wretched works of this soul” is better than the one that does so involuntarily (LH 375a). They agree that this applies to “a dog and all other animals” (LH 375a). On the human soul of an archer, they agree that the one “which voluntarily goes wrong and misses the target” is better for archery (LH 375a).⁸ Continuing, they agree that in medicine “he who willingly effects what is bad with regard to bodies” is more skilled (LH 375b).⁹ They agree that this case of the soul applies to the arts and sciences, the better soul, which appears synonymous with the more skilled soul, which “voluntarily effects evil and shameful things and goes wrong, while the more wretched one does so involuntarily” (LH 375c).¹⁰ They also agree that it is preferred “to own the souls of slaves that voluntarily go wrong and effect evil” (LH 375c).

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⁷ Compare the reaction of Hippias at 373b, “Socrates always causes confusion in the argument and seems to want to make trouble,” with that of Achilles towards Odysseus as illuminated at 365ab, “for that one is hateful to me as the gates of Hades who hides one thing in his mind but says something else.”

⁸ Here the use of ἁμαρτάνω, though directly relating to archery, foreshadows the argument to follow based in the morality of souls that ‘go wrong.’

⁹ Cf. Republic 341e—342c.

¹⁰ Leake here translates ε ἀμεινον as better in regards to the better soul (the better one).
Justice (375d—376c)

Socrates now asks if we would “wish to possess our [soul] in as good a condition as possible,” to which Hippias agrees (LH 375d). However, when Socrates asks if it is better for the soul to go wrong and do evil voluntarily or involuntarily, Hippias objects that “it would...be a terrible thing...if those doing injustice voluntarily are to be better than those doing so involuntarily” (LH 375d). Socrates then suggests that justice is “a certain capacity or knowledge or both” and “the more capable and wiser [soul]” is “better and...more capable of doing both what is noble and what is shameful with regard to all that it effects” (LH 375e). Socrates continues that this soul “effects shameful things...voluntarily through capacity and art” and with their understanding of justice, “either both or one of them” must be characteristics of justice (LH 376a). Hippias agrees and Socrates continues saying, “to do injustice at least is to do what is bad, while not to do injustice is to do what is noble” and the better and more capable soul will do injustice voluntarily and “the more worthless will do so involuntarily” (LH 376a). Hippias less assuredly agrees, and Socrates continues that the good man has a good soul and the bad man has a bad soul. Hippias agrees and Socrates presents his ultimate conclusion, that the good man with a good soul does injustice voluntarily while the bad man with a bad soul would do so involuntarily. But, regardless of the voluntary or involuntary action of the men, both act badly. Socrates claims, “he who voluntarily goes wrong does what is shameful and unjust...would be no other than the good man” (LH 376b). Hippias declares that he cannot agree with this assertion and Socrates admits that he also disagrees with this conclusion despite it being the logical end of the argument.

This passage further illuminates Socrates' critique of those who vacillate in their opinions and thoughts, like Achilles and Hippias (LH fn15). Socrates elevates Odysseus, who deceived intentionally, rather than Achilles, who lied and deceived unknowingly. Like Achilles, Hippias fails at many points to notice the emergence of contradictory statements and vacillates in his opinion until the conclusion. In contrast, Socrates steadily aims at the intended conclusion of the dialogue; though Socrates deceives, he does so intentionally and in doing so evades the notice of Hippias and Eudicus. Socrates plays Odysseus while relegating the preening Hippias to the role of Achilles.\textsuperscript{11}

Dramatic Setting and Audience

To understand the significance of any Platonic dialogue one must examine its setting and context (Strauss, 1964: 59—60). In dialogues like the \textit{Alcibiades I} and the \textit{Cleitophon},

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. \textit{Memorabilia} IV.6.15 in which Xenophon relates Socrates to Odysseus and earlier in \textit{Memorabilia} IV.2 in which Socrates displays his\textsuperscript{polytropic} argumentation in regards to voluntary wrongdoing and ignorance.
Socrates engages with his interlocutor alone and has little reason to be overly performative.\textsuperscript{12} The argument of the \textit{Cleitophon} is delivered primarily by Cleitophon as Socrates listens, offering no response; one is not needed because Socrates is not concerned with the education of Cleitophon. Cleitophon’s recounting of Socrates’ teachings is that which Plato wishes to report. However, in the \textit{Alcibiades I}, Socrates’ interactions and cross-examinations are for the primary benefit of his interlocutor. In other dialogues with a large active audience, like the \textit{Republic} or the \textit{Symposium}, Socrates presents arguments both explicitly and implicitly, leaving it to the various interlocutors to glean the meaning of his words. In the \textit{Republic}, for example, there are many interlocutors contributing to the dialogue and Socrates builds many different arguments with them—though, as Allan Bloom has argued, the arguments are all intended to educate and curb the political ambition of Glaucon (Bloom, 1991: 337, 436). Likewise, in \textit{Symposium}, Socrates targets his speech at Agathon. For students of Plato’s Socrates, the ultimate—and often implied—teaching differs greatly from his explicit argument. In other dialogues such as \textit{Lovers}, and the \textit{Apology of Socrates}, Socrates engaged with one or a few interlocutors but is ever conscious of the silent audience and uses his argument to teach and engage an audience beyond the active interlocutors; this is perhaps most obvious in the dialogues that Socrates recounts to his students, including the \textit{Republic}.

The \textit{Lesser Hippias} is another example of this practice. The active participants in the dialogue are Socrates, Eudicus, and Hippias. Yet, I argue that neither Hippias nor Eudicus are intended to be the primary beneficiaries of Socrates’ teaching in the \textit{Lesser Hippias}. Instead, the dialogue is performed by Socrates for the benefit of a silent audience. Though the precise composition of the silent audience is never revealed in the \textit{Lesser Hippias}, the context identifies its character, and allows for the reader to understand Socrates’ motivation for speaking with Hippias a second time, as well as to better understand the implicit ends of his strange argument.

Recall that the dialogue opens at the conclusion of Hippias’ speech in Athens. Eudicus compels Socrates to question Hippias, since he did not do so inside (\textit{LH} 363a, c, 373bc; \textit{GH} 286b). This is the primary dramatic setting; Eudicus’ claim at 363a, alongside Socrates’ claim that one of the reasons he was reluctant to question Hippias was “because there was the \textit{hoi polloi} inside…but now, since there are fewer of us,” he is willing to engage, confirming that there is a broader audience present (\textit{LH} 364bff). With the presence of a

\textsuperscript{12} In the \textit{Cleitophon}, Socrates notes, “we happen to be alone” (\textit{Cleitophon} 406).
broader audience established, we are closer to understanding who constitutes it. Blundell and Ludlam claim that those present, whom Eudicus acknowledges, are Hippias’ supporters. Most scholars pass over the audience without comment.

I maintain that the silent audience is instead made up of Socrates’ own students (Ludlam 1992: 141). Eudicus notes that those who remain are the few from the many who “alone are left who would particularly make claim to share in the pursuit of philosophy” (LH 363a). Consider that in both Plato’s and Xenophon’s accounts, the dialogue is presented as a direct dialogue, rather than a recounting of events by Socrates as in other works (like Plato’s Republic), this would suggest that perhaps Plato or Xenophon were in the audience, or at least other students of Socrates were there to recount the story (Memorabilia IV.4.6—25).

Critical details of both the Greater Hippias and the Lesser Hippias support the claim that the audience is constituted by Socrates’ students. In the Greater Hippias, Hippias invites Socrates to attend the presentation of the speech that immediately precedes the Lesser Hippias. Hippias tells Socrates, “so be there yourself, and bring others who are able, when they hear, to judge what is said” (GH 286b). This suggests that those present at the Lesser Hippias are those whom Socrates was instructed to bring during the Greater Hippias. Once the speech that occurs between the Greater Hippias and the Lesser Hippias is over, the smaller crowd would likely include those who came with Socrates, probably waiting to observe any of his interactions or waiting to leave with him (Memorabilia III.11.1—2, IV.1.1). Socrates’ lingering after the event suggests that although he was not going to approach Hippias, he expected to be approached and was ready to question him again—not for the purpose of teaching the large crowd that heard the speech, but as a teaching demonstration for his students.

With Socrates’ students as the audience, Socrates’ implicit attack on sophistry becomes more pregnant. Following the events of the Greater Hippias, Socrates had no reason to question Hippias again. The Greater Hippias opens with a lengthy discussion between Socrates and Hippias that centres around Hippias’ career. This includes discussion of Hippias’ earnings, the laws of Sparta, and Hippias’ activities in Sparta (Greater Hippias 282e, 283d—286c). The dialogue then transitions into a discussion of the beautiful during which Socrates continually refutes the assertions of Hippias as “incorrect, if not ridiculous” and it concludes with them seeking to understand the relationship between the beautiful and the good (GH 303e—304b; Alexander, 2008: 12). As in the Lesser Hippias, the Greater Hippias ends in apparent Socratic aporia and with Socrates’ feigned concern for his vacillation and

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13 This is further supported in Xenophon’s Memorabilia, in which he recounts that Socrates was talking to some people when Hippias approached him (Memorabilia IV.4.5). The dialogue Xenophon recounts shares similarities with Plato’s accounts of both the Lesser and Greater Hippias.
departure from the conclusions of the wise (GH 304c). This dialogue left Socrates rather dissatisfied with the wisdom of Hippias; so why question him again?14

The *Lesser Hippias* offers an explanation. There, Socrates explains his methods of investigation, questioning, and learning. He claims that he questions his interlocutors thoroughly and is “indefatigable about the things said by [the one whom Socrates holds to be wise], questioning him so that by understanding I may be benefited in some way,” but “if the one speaking seems to me to be of little account neither do I ply him with questions [question him again], nor is what he says of concern to me” (LH 369d).15 Applying this lesson to the Hippias, Socrates does not begin to question him without the intercession of Eudicus, nor does he question him in the presence of the *boi palloi* (LH 364b).

**Conclusion: Socrates’ Teaching**

Socrates concludes that “he who voluntarily goes wrong and does what is shameful and unjust…would be no other than the good man” (LH 376b). Lampert argues that this furthers Socrates’ usual teaching that “no one voluntarily goes wrong and commits injustice,” claiming that Socrates is suggesting that no one is truly good, nor has the level of self-knowledge and self-control to go wrong voluntarily; all go wrong involuntarily because their culpability lies in ignorance (Lampert, 2002: 252—53). Yet, following Sprague, I judge that Socrates’ contradictory conclusion is not one reached through confusion—as Socrates himself suggests—nor is it merely a sophisticated version of Socrates’ other teachings as Lampert suggests. Rather, it is an intentional dramatic and ironic teaching for the benefit of his students (Sprague, 2013: 77). It seems more apparent that Socrates is proving to his students that he is “the most capable, prudent, knowing, and wise” in regard to the just nature of souls precisely because he can lie about them (LH 366a).16

Socrates’ contradiction of his other teachings in the second part of the dialogue is grounded in the conclusions of the first. Socrates had already concluded that Hippias was

14 For a longer discussion on the relevance of the *Greater Hippias* in the context of the *Lesser Hippias* see: Alexander, 2008: 9—12. Alexander goes on to conclude that: “The questioning of Hippias in the *Greater Hippias*… may be seen as a test of the sophist’s knowledge, a test which he abjectly fails. His claim to wisdom is a spurious one. Since Socrates now knows this, it is unlikely that he goes to the school of Pheidostratus to further assure himself of Hippias’ lack of wisdom. But perhaps he goes there to reveal this fact to some of his fellow Athenians” (Alexander, 2008: 14—15). Alexander here suggests that, as I argue, Socrates’ primary audience was not Hippias, although she fails to specify the audience for the benefit of whom the dialogue takes place.

15 The Greek *epanerotáo* is translated as both “to question again” and “ply with questions”, it suggests that Socrates would not engage with a person he didn’t find to be wise on a second occasion, hence his reluctance to speak inside.

16 Here it is worth noting that *Memorabilia* IV.4, in which Xenophon recounts Socrates’ discussion with Hippias, is a section about Socrates’ concern for justice, for “he did not hide the judgement he had concerning justice, at any rate, but showed it even in deed… he [also] often spoke in this manner with others too” (*Memorabilia* IV.1.1, IV.1.5).
not wise, so when he disagrees with Hippias he is not disagreeing with the wise, as he had claimed to fear initially, but instead it is Hippias who is incapable of learning from the expert—Socrates. Socrates claims that their dialogue logically concludes that it is the mark of the good soul to do wrong voluntarily. Hippias does not attempt to convince Socrates that he is wrong but instead shows alarm that he cannot agree with the conclusion of Socrates, for fear of showing his ignorance in the company of a wise man but also because of the non-conventional nature of the argument.

Socrates, however, is not telling the truth, nor is his primary concern in alarming and confusing Hippias. Socrates is instead lying on the subject that he is the expert—the good and just soul. Socrates had repeatedly shown that he was the expert on what is the good and just soul—generally through defining what it is not—by questioning anyone who would discuss the subjects with him, and by starting from a claim of not knowing (LH 376bc). However, in accordance with the first half of the dialogue, a sign of expertise includes the ability to lie the best about the subject about which one is an expert. Further, Socrates’ conclusion so radically departs from his usual teaching on the nature of voluntary and involuntary wrong, that his students would see it as a farcical conclusion.\(^{17}\) Despite this being apparent to the students, Hippias ends the dialogue in a state of great confusion. With this, Socrates therefore demonstrates his ability to lie about the good and just soul in order to solidify his position as the expert on that subject to his students. The confused Hippias appears to be speaking the truth in the latter part of the dialogue, yet his refusal to agree with Socrates ought to be understood in the context of Socrates’ exclamation: “what greater proof of ignorance…than when someone differs with wise men” (LH 372bc)?

The fact that this dialogue takes place at the expense of a sophist and at the encouragement of the sophist’s sponsor cannot be neglected. Socrates’ teaching was in constant tension—and Socrates himself was in competition—with the sophists. Both were generally regarded as pests to the Athenians, however, the rich would hire the sophists in hope of teaching their sons the skills necessary to be prominent in the assembly (Apology of Socrates 30e). Socrates was put to death for his teachings and methods; noble men would work to keep their sons away from Socrates (Apology of Socrates 33df). Socrates’ students thus lived in a culture opposed to them and the newer more sceptical students likely needed frequent convincing that Socrates was a worthy teacher.\(^{18}\) If he was forwarding an argument suggesting that the expert can best tell the truth and lie, it was necessary for him to prove his

\(^{17}\) See for example: Apology of Socrates and Gorgias.

\(^{18}\) Compare the image of Socrates as presented by Aristophanes in the Clouds, to the anger and skeptical nature of his students as seen in the Cleitophon.
ability to lie on the subject of his expertise. As many scholars note, Socrates not only engages in the sophist’s ways by bending words and their meanings, but he also quite decisively beats Hippias at his own game by successfully confusing him and leaving Hippias upset and reluctant to continue at several points throughout the dialogue (Lampert, 2002: 254; Corey, 2013: 113—14). Here Socrates employs the use of his polytropic nature, in the style of Odysseus. Unlike Hippias—and sophists broadly—who bends words and their meanings for personal gain, Socrates turns the arguments in search of truth for both himself and his students. Although, in this dialogue, he uses his expertise to lie on the subject in which is he the expert.

By refuting the sophist in the company of his students, Socrates accomplishes several goals. First, he shows his superiority to the sophist and all that sophistry represents: a materialistic and conventional approach to wisdom as found in Hippias’ adornments as opposed to Socrates’ lack of adornments. Second, Hippias’ inability to make coherent arguments that forward justice as being the mark of the more skilled stand in contrast to Socrates’ superior wisdom. Instead of besting Socrates through his supposed superior knowledge of rhetoric and poetry, these are the very things that limit Hippias, leading him to direct his shame, which results from his ineptitude, into irritation towards Socrates (LH 370e-371a, 373bc). Socrates therefore successfully advances his teaching to his students about the nature of justice in terms of voluntary and involuntary wrongdoing by showing what it cannot be: the ultimate conclusion of the Lesser Hippias is ridiculous, and in ridiculous tension with Socrates’ other arguments—and Hippias is unable to resist it. Socrates thus produces another demonstration in which he elevates his way of education and demotes sophistry. By successfully embarrassing and refuting a sophist, Socrates works to keep his followers away from sophistry and the false claims to education of the soul that sophists offer.

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The Contemporary Turkish Government, Ideological Strategies and the Symbolic: A Psychoanalytic Approach to the Contemporary Politics of Turkey

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Abstract

The contemporary government of Turkey has been seeing increasing support for several years, and obstacles it has faced have not reduced the number of its supporters by much. This paper emphasizes that the inquiries which interpret this political conjuncture should consider the Turkish ideological atmosphere and discursive arrangements employed by politicians to manufacture consent. The author aims to discover the relation between the success of the ruling party and its discursive strategies while examining its symbolic structure and imaginary constructions using Lacanian psychoanalysis by employing interpretative discourse analysis. The author intends to highlight the nodal points of the hegemonic discourse, seeks to uncover rhetorical patterns, and attempts to explore the applicability of psychoanalysis on political and sociological issues.

Keywords

Jacques Lacan; Political Discourse; Psychoanalysis; Turkey; Unconsciousness
Introduction

Various political traditions in Turkey employ distinct discursive strategies for mobilizing people and manufacturing consent. The current Turkish government, the Justice and Development Party (JDP), likewise utilizes distinct rhetorical patterns for similar reasons. However, the JDP has differentiated itself from other political parties due to its impressive success. In contrast to its antecedents, the contemporary ruling party’s discourse has influenced Turkish society a great amount and gained enormous support. This paper therefore intends to trace the discursive patterns employed by the ruling party from a Lacanian psychoanalytic standpoint in order to demonstrate how its dominant ideology and discourse rooted in a symbolic structure strongly contribute to the ruling party’s continuing hegemony.

The JDP’s discourse has its roots in the discourses of the Welfare Party (WP) and National Salvation Party (NSP), which sublimate old Ottoman times and accuse Turkish modernists of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire while ignoring Islamist and conservative contributions to the modernization process (Yıldız, 2003). The JDP approaches Turkish modernity and the New Turkish Republic from similar standpoints. Thus, the conservative and Islamist movements of today both sublimate Ottoman times and view Turkish modernization as a simple operation, begun by İttihat Terakki and its successors, while ignoring its intricacies, transformations, and ramifications. This hegemonic discourse positions itself against the center seen to be dominated by bureaucracy, the military, and elites. Similarly, the JDP fetishizes old Ottoman times as a pre-traumatic condition.

This attitude can be analyzed by referring to the locus of conflict between the different political traditions. The conflict occurs mainly between the social democratic tradition, represented by Republican People’s Party (RPP) which sublimates Western values, and the conservative-Islamist tradition represented by the JDP which tries to recall old Ottoman times as a perfect moment of Turkish history. This antagonism is strongly contained in the discourse of the ruling party. JDP supporters take a negative attitude toward secular understandings sympathizing with the West while asserting that before the JDP came into power, many people felt frustrated and discriminated against (Lowen, 2017). In other words, they claim that before the JDP government many people had been feeling like black Turks in opposition against white Turks. For instance, one JDP supporter stated:

“(Erdoğan) He’s the only one we can trust. Because of the headscarf, because of our security, for our Qur’an and the mosque. He was the only one who supported us, he always stands beside those who were oppressed” (Kareem, 2017).
The function of the discourse in the mobilization of the masses by the ruling party is crucial in these processes, and the discourse is likewise structured around a central fantasy involving many imaginary elements. Herein, the psychoanalytic method posits itself as a significant tool for an inquiry into the discourse’s power due to its usefulness for discovering the structures of fantasies and their role in maintaining certain political realities. The divided structure of the subject which contains a gap due to the alienation is exclusively indicated by psychoanalysis. The alienation of the self starts with the penetration by the law of the father and this process led to a fundamental lack in the subject. While fantasy functions to fill the gap, psychoanalysis directs attention to the inevitability of this very gap and illuminates the structuration of the unconscious in relation to the lack and the phantasmagoric structure of the discourse.

All in all, the situation is reminiscent of contemporary populist rhetoric and policies implemented by rising contemporary right-wing governments around the globe. This paper aims to grasp the essence of these rhetorics and their functions from a psychoanalytic point of view. Psychoanalysis is crucial to discover the characteristics of ideological and discursive strategies due to its emphasis on the functioning of the fantasy. These characteristics – such as the substantiability of the identification with the leader; the split between the elite and the people through the third disruptive element, etc. – also constitute several similarities with the contemporary populist right-wing governments. Hence, the paper starts with a review of previous works which emphasize the role of symbolic structures, unconscious processes, and social imaginaries in the formation and functioning of the social. The second section contains a presentation of discourse analysis as the main utilized methodology and a justification of the employment of Lacanian psychoanalysis in conducting this work. Consequently, the third section emphasizes the role of the identification of people with their leader and tries to discover how this phenomenon functions and what the main consequences of it are. The fourth section examines the representation of the West in the central fantasy of Turkish politics as well as the Ottoman era being represented as a pre-traumatic condition. This section intends to discover the main mechanisms behind the formation of the aforementioned fantasy. The last section investigates nodal points of the discourse as it is anchored in the social imaginary while placing emphasis on the ethics of psychoanalysis.

**The Psyche and the Social**

The compatibility between psychoanalysis and the social sciences constitutes a cornerstone of this paper. Likewise, the substantiability of meaning systems, symbolic
structures, and imaginary constructions can be considered as a significant discussion as concerns social and political life. The social is not something reducible to a collection of individuals; it shapes identity, consciousness, and the perceptions of the members of a group. Individual psychic life is not something independent of social structures. Interactions between the two have led to many societal transformations throughout history, and mobilizations of the masses can be analyzed in terms of the social and cultural life of the societies in which they take place.

Historical transformations have given way to changes in the individual psyche through modernization (Fromm, 1965: 53). Fromm (1965: 45) points out that the resolution of primary ties which refer to the hierarchical ties of social organization dominating the Medieval Era, led to anxiety in the individual psyche. These processes further led to the emergence of authoritarian personalities, and finally the rise of authoritarianism in society. In his analysis, Fromm (1965: 72) underlines that the balanced society of the Medieval Era was transformed by novel transformations. Modernity altered the persisting bonds of society by producing new imaginaries, and these affected the psyches of individuals. Similarly, Taylor (1998: 38-39) points out that the modern imaginary brought about a new sort of interaction both within society and also between monarchs and their subjects. Mediated connection between the state and society was replaced in the modern imaginary by new horizontal forms. The policies implemented during Turkey’s modernization process likewise sought to replace old communal bonds with a new collective identity based on horizontal access via citizenship (Mardin, 1981: 209). These processes further altered the self-consciousness of the society and the perceptions of its members.

Similarly, Marcuse (1970: 47) underlines that modernization’s weakening of the father figure’s status and of primordial bonds led to the diminishment of the autonomy of the ego. These processes can cause the ego ideal to be reflected in an external figure like a political leader; they permit an intermingling of psychoanalysis and politics (1970: 48). Therefore, there is a bridge between historical-social transformations and psychological alterations. These changes also appeared alongside the emergence of fascism. Moore (1974: 436) points out that the self-consciousness of landed aristocracy vulgarized because of modernization processes spreading from above, and this gave way to the rise of fascist ideologies. These processes signify the substantiality of existing meaning structures and the ethos of both the totality of society and its segments in politics. As Castoriadis (2005: 117) stresses, society cannot be reduced to its functions since it cannot maintain its existence without symbolic networks and social imaginaries. He asserts that a central imaginary – such
as elementary symbols in totemism, religion in Greek culture, pseudo-rationality in capitalism, etc. – provides the meaning for both social existence and the outer world (2005: 130). Furthermore, these symbolic and imaginary elements constitute the unconscious dynamics of a given society through rituals, practices, sedimented meanings, etc. Unconsciousness, as Freud describes, is not something autonomous from social processes, but rather flourishes through them; thus, Freud (1962: 44) asserts that social regulations deprive the self of pleasure, and that the compensation of this loss is very crucial for the development of the human psyche. The compensation of this very loss is strongly related to the symbolic structure of social life.

The development of the individual psyche is strongly related to historical-social transformations. All the above theorists emphasize the role of symbolic meanings and imaginary constructions on unconscious processes and identity formation. The political climate of an era is inseparable from such characteristics, and the psyche of an individual is not independent of the social and cultural structures of their societies. The aforementioned studies try to bridge the psychic lives of the individual and the social while keeping in mind that the unconscious of an individual is shaped by society. Lacanian psychoanalysis similarly emphasizes the role of the symbolic and the imaginary in such processes. The dead father in the Oedipus Myth qua the symbolic father generates the very law as the ground of the social existence (Lacan, 2017: 132). Lacan (2017: 156) asserts that the father’s prohibition of the self from their primordial relation with the desired object led to a castrated subject. It is the symbolic father who frustrates the relation between the self and the desired object through the law. That is, the symbolic function of the father permits the very existence of social by generating a lack in the subject since the self loses its desired object through the father’s intervention and enters into the realm of social, namely the realm of law. While Lacan (1978: 107) identifies the symbolic with the human subject; so with culture, the imaginary is characterized with the animality and nature. Imaginary matrix provides a feeling of unity for the divided subject. Yet, the disruption of the primordial structure leads to sublimated imaginary residues due to the fragmentation. Lacanian psychoanalysis provides crucial clues regarding the relationship between the self and the social in relation to the symbolic and the imaginary orders in respect to both imaginary residues, symbolic structuration and the role of desire. However, with the help of Lacanian psychoanalysis, it seems possible to go one step further by rejecting the dichotomy between the individual and society in the realm of the unconscious. Concerning the methodological approach of this paper, the next section contains both the Lacanian understanding of the unconscious as something not consumed
in the particularity of the self as well as the problematization of the compatibility of Lacanian psychoanalysis with social inquiry.

**Lacanian Psychoanalysis as a Method of Analysis**

This paper tries to conduct an interpretive discourse analysis based in Lacanian psychoanalysis in order to discover the relationship between textual gestures, discursive arrangements, and the contemporary Turkish social context. Such an analysis must also contain theoretical discussions related to the appropriateness of using Lacanian psychoanalysis in the social sciences. This paper therefore aims to discover the substantiality of Lacanian psychoanalysis when it comes to analyzing the populist ideology of contemporary Turkish politics while trying to justify the application of Lacanian categories in social analyses.

Discourse analysis has been chosen as the main method for several reasons. First of all, the paper examines the implication certain ideological processes have on Turkish political life. Here, Althusser's conceptualization of ideology presents itself as a significant tool towards understanding such a process since, in his understanding, ideology forms subjects through interpellation (Althusser, 1971: 174). This process is centered around a third dimension, the Other Subject, which is, in the Turkish context, reminiscent of the country's ruling party. Althusser's conceptualization illuminates the tripartite relation between the Other Subject, ideology, and subjugated subjects; he emphasizes the dissemination of ideology through practices, rituals, etc. (Althusser, 1971: 178). Yet, it is limited in the sense that Althusser avoids discussing the cognitive dimensions of ideology in relation to knowledge. Herein, Eagleton (1991: 43, 49) criticizes the Althusserian understanding while maintaining that ideological practices coexist with beliefs and arguments. The rituals and practices of people are fused with cognitive dimensions such as thoughts, ideas, convictions, etc. As such, discursive gestures emanating from the Other Subject are significant dimensions of ideological formations, something this paper intends to discover. Such a study necessitates a discourse analysis rooted in an interpretative methodology. To conduct such work, it is a must to begin with possible objections against the employment of Lacanian psychoanalysis in analyzing social phenomena.

Even if Lacanian psychoanalysis is being used frequently in postcolonial research and by some scholars of contemporary cultural studies (e.g. Frantz Fanon (1986), Hommi K. Bhabha (1994), Saul Newman (2007), Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001), etc.), there may possibly be several objections to the application of Lacanian categories to bigger social structures since the categories are rooted in the relationship between the analyst and the
analysand. Also, Lacan himself did not allow the application of his theory outside of the clinical experience (Badiou and Roudinesco, 2014: 20). However, there are several significant reasons which help justify the application of this psychoanalytic method in social and political studies. First of all, the Lacanian unconscious is not something belonging to the self but rather it is constituted in large social processes. When Lacan mentions the unconscious, he states that: “To that which goes unnoticed, the word everywhere applies just as well as nowhere” (Lacan, 1990: 5). In other words, the Lacanian unconscious is a non-place as well as an all-place. Lacan’s famous sentence, “the unconscious...is structured like a language” (Lacan, 2006: 737), signifies that the unconscious is developed through social and cultural processes because it is based on the symbolic which transcends the imaginary self. Furthermore, while the Lacanian understanding of the self just refers to an imaginary product, he points to the Merleau-Pontian primordial body and analyzes things as if they constituted a totality (Lacan, 1978: 71-72). Furthermore, Lacan relates the unconscious to socialization types, cultural constellations, and historically formed categories of understanding rather than to an imaginative singularity.

Another possible objection to the use of Lacanian psychoanalysis in social studies is that if political analyses get stuck in the ideological stage, insufficient information may result because hegemony has several sorts of techniques for manufacturing consent other than ideology and discourse. Eagleton (1991: 33) points out the example of Thatcher in which Thatcher did not gain support just with the help of ideological apparatuses, but rather many kinds of policies were implemented to support the process. However, it seems that ideological apparatuses and discursive strategies have been more critical in the case of manufacturing consent in Turkey due to the intensity of their rhetorical effects. An indicator of this situation is the increasingly monopolized media in Turkey which distributes an enormous amount of propaganda. Tokdoğan (2018: 74) asserts that the JDP can be differentiated from its antecedents because while other parties from a similar political tradition could not gain this amount of support, the political narrative of the glorious Ottoman-era as reinforced by the JDP has been settled throughout society and becoming banalized since the 2000s. The JDP has therefore affected many parts of Turkish society and has maintained its hegemony for several years by the means of discursive strategies. The conservatism which the JDP represents is not a stationary movement but rather it constitutes a more complicated picture; that is, conservatism should be regarded by referring to the continuous reproduction of the sacred, the ancient, and the traditional (Bora, 2015: 54). This reproduction process necessitates various sorts of discursive arrangements. To understand
this complex picture, it is necessary to consider the reproduction process through its various rhetorical strategies.

As was aforementioned, Lacanian psychoanalysis was chosen as the method of analysis in this paper for several reasons. First of all, political reality is established at the symbolic stage and the maintenance of it is reinforced by fantasy (Stavrakakis, 1999: 71). Hence, the psychoanalytic approach can enhance our understanding of how fantasy is structured to support a social reality. The condition of Turkey especially constitutes a prime case for this since the elements of fantasy serve a crucial function here. This can be observed in reflections made by the media, discourses among the people, and in the enormous impact political rhetoric has had on the society. Moreover, the function of fantasy is directed to occupy the gap between enunciation and symbolic representation (Zizek, 1998: 76); that is, it is oriented to suppress the occurrence of the real. Several cases in the rhetoric of the ruling party have exemplified this issue. For example, when crises have occurred in Turkey as an expression of the real, the discourses which work to strengthen the fantasy have intensified. Lacan (2007: 107) asserts that the surplus jouissance produced by the process of representation always occurs due to an excessive element provided by the slave. The unessential consciousness of the slave which is characterized with the consciousness for another is defined with the service for the essential consciousness and this service combined with its work leads to an excess (Hegel, 1977: 115). The essential consciousness can relate with itself only through the mediation of the unessential consciousness. The subject’s imaginary relation with the objet petit a, the surplus lost object, constitutes the formula of the fantasy. Moreover, the fantasy must fill the gap of the place of the lost object and support the discourse; otherwise, the symbolic structure it seeks to uphold can be seriously damaged. There is a barrier between the divided subject and the object, and their impossible relationship is articulated by the very fantasy, as indicated by Lacan (2007: 108). The necessity of the fantasy in this process appears similarly in political situations as is the case with Turkey. Psychoanalysis is therefore exclusively crucial for grasping this issue and for reflecting on its rhetorical patterns.

On the other hand, psychoanalysis can provide us with substantial clues regarding the role of ideology. In their early writings, Marx and Engels (1998: 67-70) analyze ideology as a process of alienation, referring to that of the conscious from material historical reality. Zizek (2008: 24) asserts that the orthodox formula of ideology is “Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es— they do not know it, but they are doing it.” This statement affirms that the conscious becomes false by being alienated from reality. However, the “social imaginary... is more real
than the ‘real’,” as is described by Castoriadis (2005: 140), and the reduction of ideology into a mere problem of false consciousness ignores the complex interactions between symbolic structures, the social imaginary, and practical existence. In contrast to the reduction of orthodox understandings, Althusser (2014: 156) asserts that ideology is rooted in habitual practices while giving priority to ontology. Yet, such an approach likewise contains its limitations as is mentioned above. However, Lacanian psychoanalysis constitutes a mixture of these two approaches – ideology as a problem of practices and as a problem of consciousness – by emphasizing the role of ideology as concerns the gap between the symbolic and the imaginary. In other words, while accepting the practical role of ideology, psychoanalysis aims to provide clues for the subversion of the master discourse through the discourse of the analysand. Zizek (2008: 43) criticizes Althusser by insisting that the Big Other is also incomplete due to the ambiguity of its desire, and this very gap permits the critique of ideology. However, he likewise criticizes the Orthodox understanding of false consciousness. While Zizek quotes Sloterdijk’s definition of ideology as “They know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it” (2008: 25), he revises this conceptualization by emphasizing that ideology is rooted in practical existence. It is therefore not possible to subvert a dominant ideology by way of a mere enunciation of the truth. To illustrate, when people look at gruesome pictures from slaughterhouses and see animals being tortured, they feel disgusted, but the feeling generally does not project itself to how they view meat on a dinner table. Even if they know the facts of where it came from, they prefer to ignore them. This is also the case with political orientation. When people are faced with actual problems like claims of corruption, whether the people accept these claims or not, they prefer to ignore them and claim things like “They steal but they work, too”, these sorts of statements were very popular during the days of the corruption claims. İsmet Akça (2014: 28) claims that people in Turkey are aware of the government’s corruption but they prefer to discount it because they do not want to break up their relationship with the ruling party which is materially and spiritually satisfying their desires. A significant part of this process seems to involve the identification of the masses with their political leader. Lacanian psychoanalysis can provide crucial clues about the functioning of this identification.

**Construction of Identification**

The main elements of the JDP’s speech involve apparent identity politics which embrace different sorts of identity groups (Doğanay, 2007: 66). While the discourse is based on a critique of persistent political paradigms like Kemalism and the dominance of the army, the JDP also embraces the lower classes and takes a position against elitism. This point is
apparent in the following words of Erdoğan: “In this country, there is a segregation of Black Turks and White Turks. Your brother Tayyip belongs to Black Turks” (Heper and Toktaş, 2003: 162). Herein, while white Turks are referred to as those who are from the middle class, have Western-oriented values, and are bound to secularist ideals, black Turks are referred to as those who are underprivileged and who feel others under persistent regimes, e.g. being religious groups, ethnic minorities, and mostly members of lower classes. This division is apparent in the analyses of Bali (2018: 329), whereby the notion of white Turks refers to individuals living in Istanbul and possessing cultural capital while the notion of black Turks refers to individuals from Anatolia who lack similar cultural possessions. The illustrated situation seems to be compatible with the main characteristics of populist politics. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013: 500-501) underline the dichotomy between the elite and the people as employed by these politics. Contrasting themselves against the “corrupt elite,” the JDP claims to represent the authentic community of people who are segregated and excluded.

One of Erdoğan’s supporters has stated that “Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is one of us,” “Before, all the leaders were rich kids or high class. He’s not like that,” and “He speaks our language, gets aggressive like we do – and tells the world what we want to say” (Lowen, 2017). Erdoğan always portrays a populist image: he is from Kasimpasa which is a lower class area of Istanbul, he graduated from Imam Hatip – high schools in Turkey which provide many religious courses in addition to the regular curriculums, these schools were strongly being criticized by the opposition parties during those days because they claimed that the schools violate the secular principles – , he does not prefer to wear eye-catching clothing, and so on. He has also stated, “I love your voices, because I am one of you” (Heper and Toktaş, 2003: 165). On the other hand, Dindar (2014: 194) mentions that the motto of the JDP was “We walked in the same road together,” and that Erdoğan referred to his voters as his brothers and sisters. Yet, this form of discourse evolved to have an increasingly authoritarian attitude when Erdoğan became a more dominant figure and began calling people his reeves or his officers. In other words, over time, Erdoğan has more and more taken on the role of a father figure. The initial discursive pattern has been sublated into the newer one with the main point of the discourse being to lead the masses to identify with his personality. Through identification with the father figure, the subject – in this case the masses – replaces a potential physical loss through symbolic gains (Nasio, 1998: 73).

The definition of ideology is central to understanding identification after separation. Also, it is a remarkable point for understanding loyalty to Erdoğan. In this sense it is possible to turn to a reference made by Zizek (2000: 323) to a Marx Brothers’ film: “...Groucho Marx,
caught in a lie, answers angrily: ‘Whom do you believe, your eyes or my words?’ This apparently absurd logic expresses perfectly the functioning of the symbolic order.” This is to say that we prefer to accept our fantasies even in their absurdity since it is the very function of fantasy to do so. Fantasy constructs reality itself, and people cannot give up this founding element of their reality. This point can be exemplified through several cases such as the corruption claims against the rule of the JDP and Erdoğan, the emerging political and fiscal crisis, the anger of the Gezi protests, the rise in bomb attacks after the 2015 elections, WikiLeaks documents, the dramatic decline of the value of Turkish currency, etc. On the other hand, rival parties generally condemn the ruling party for illegalities or they publish documents like videotapes against the government. This kind of rhetoric reminds university discourse which is unable to subvert the master’s position. In other words, they try to falsify the hegemonic discourse by claiming that the ruling party is deceiving society, but these claims generally annoy JDP supporters rather than decreasing their support. For instance, while dissidents argued that the coup attack was not an actual attempt to overthrow the government but was in fact coordinated by the JDP, supporters of the ruling party blamed the dissidents angrily on many social websites for being traitors.

In his work, Zizek (2000: 329) mentions the relationship between Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, affirming that even if everybody knew there was a relationship between them, they would still prefer to ignore this fact because of its distance from the big Other’s gaze, rendering it impossible for it to inscribe itself upon reality. On the contrary, the matter of the relationship is something that could stimulate an identification process. Zizek suggests that identification with a leader becomes stronger when the leader’s shortcomings are visible as was the case with Hitler who always presented many weaknesses such as losing himself and crying in front of audiences (Zizek, 2000: 391). These weaknesses make identification much easier. They exhibit shortcomings in the Other and provide something for onlookers to identify with. Erdoğan also loses himself in his speeches, experiences crying jags, and behaves in a much more bitter manner than a typical politician. It is important to note therefore that emphases on the weaknesses of a leader or the underlining of corrupt practices of a party do not reduce support for either, but rather can contribute to identification of the onlookers with the leader or the party. To illustrate this, despite corruption claims having gained traction, dialogue has become popular among the people whereby they postulate that they would potentially steal a bit of money for themselves too if that if they were the president of the country. Erdoğan supporters believe that he is improving the conditions of Turkey so much that stealing a bit of money is not a big problem because anybody might do
this. In other words, Erdoğan’s weaknesses do not lead to a reduction in support for him but rather increase it day by day by fostering identification with him. This identification contains strong phantasmagoric elements: it represents a complex phantasmagoric relation between the symbolic role of the father – represented by the West – and the primordial fantasy of the pre-traumatic condition – represented by the glorious ages of the Ottomans – and the oriental subject.

**Fantasy and the Image of the West**

“With this temporal reconfiguration, the past becomes a time of suffering, trauma, and silence, and the present an ideal moment in which to launch a collective process of remembering and healing that opens the door to a future of restored health and well-being. As a therapeutic language of memory, ‘coming to terms with the past’ challenges official Kemalist history by bringing to light repressed memories” (Kaya, 2015: 682).

The ruling party’s discourse makes an attempt of drawing a boundary between New Turkey and the old one. Açikel’s critique (1996: 158), as one of few psychoanalytic analyses concentrating on Turkish politics, stresses that interpellation in the Turkish context is realized with the psychopathology of sacred oppression while characterizing the process using the Hegelian notion of negation of negation – a moment which yields novel results than the previous shape of consciousness – in which masses project their will into contemporary discourse and policies. He asserts that sacred oppression is the dominant ideology of crowds who feel that their ego-ideal is under threat, and it is a false consciousness of a false reality whereby the falseness refers to the incompatibility between the ego-ideal and the discourse of the subject. All of these ideological mechanisms have advanced through the New Turkey discourse.

New Turkey is associated with the growing power of Turkey and the recovery of Ottoman times. The dialogue that took place between Shimon Peres and Erdoğan during the annual meeting in Davos in 2009 illustrates this point. Erdoğan objected against Peres and this deeply affected Turkish society because the issue was perceived as an act of Turkish intervention on the international arena. The perception of the State of Israel by Turkish society reinforces the importance of this event since the significant portion of the society perceives Israel as an imperialist state which is established by the USA for invading and weakening Muslim states of the Middle East. Tokdoğan (2018: 140-141) considers this issue to have been a turning point for Turkey because it was regarded by several segments of society as a revolt of the subaltern. Many newspapers published articles about this incident with wording referring to the power and courage of Erdoğan. Furthermore, the components
of the phantasm generated by the hegemonic ideology of the JDP emphasize the rising strength of Turkey both internationally and nationally. As an example, many people have started to see Erdoğan as both the leader of the Middle East and the leader of the world.

On the other hand, many speeches also point out how Turkey has developed under the JDP government. Emphasis, for example, is placed on new modern multi-lane roads, airports, and trains as a demonstration of Turkey’s rising power and technological advancement. At one of the JDP’s political rallies in 2016, Erdoğan stated: “The West is jealous of our dams, bridges and subways” (Sönmez, 2016). These constructions are not just solid objects occupying space, but rather something that creates webs of meaning. This can be observed in the occurrences of Gothic architecture, the constructions of the Nazi period, and in the monumental buildings built by the Soviets. These constructions represent phalluses in space in order to generate an impression of power. Recent buildings in Turkey from new shopping centers to bridges, mosques, and a palace follow this example.

Apart from Açıkel’s article, the work of Somay is another Lacanian political analysis published in Turkey. He stresses that the splendorous image of the Ottoman era, sublimated family values, sincerity of local folk music, and community spirit have become objects of desire connected to glorious ages because the glorious era of the oriental subject has been strongly damaged by the growing power of the West (Somay, 2011: 55). Therefore, the West draws the image of the omnipotent father and is seen as a separator symbol splitting the subject from its ultimate object of fantasy. The image of separation is effective throughout the process because the fantasy of pre-castration always reflects itself in several elements of the discourse.

Furthermore, Lacanian perversion can be decisive for analyzing attitude. The fantasy of the pervert is fixated on imitating the big Other and its power. Fink (2009: 67) affirms that while the function of the neurotic is repression, the pervert is defined through disavowal. So, the pervert is the one who imitates the Other’s desire without questioning it because the pervert cannot be separated from the mOther – symbolic mother as a Big Other – exemplified in this case in the glorious Ottoman era – and fails to constitute signification by occupying a proper position on the symbolic level. In other words, the pervert cannot constitute itself in the position of its father on the symbolic level, but rather continues to be an imaginary object of the mOther. Lacan asserts that the pervert imitates the role of the omnipotent being word for word (2013: 76). It seems to resemble contemporary discourse, which fails to take a position in the contemporary world order by ordinary means, but rather prefers to imitate old Ottoman values and attitudes word for word.
The nostalgia for pre-castration mainly signifies the fantasy of the pervert. Yet, while the pervert imitates, it can only replicate the powerful condition as a poor caricature or a bad likeness. Note that while the Turkish currency was declining from day to day, many politicians were speaking of the Turkish economy’s development. Ridiculous innovations and useless buildings in Turkey can be exemplified in this regard as well. Furthermore, the conservative discourse in Turkey generally prefers to refer to the country’s past status of power when a problem arises between Turkey and the West. The insistence on the omnipotence of the Turkish nation is a major element in these discursive strategies, but contemporary reality paints a picture of poor economic conditions, ongoing conflicts, and slow technological advancement. However, while the conservative discourse ignores these poor conditions and blames imaginary enemies, it also establishes a fantasy based on an internal strength ascribed to the Turkish nation in general. It therefore also produces the acceleration of primitive nationalist tendencies and resembles the function of disavowal in perversion.

The mainstream tendency of critiques against the JDP regime goes hand in hand with concepts based in European modernization, e.g. individual rights, humanitarianism, freedom, and so on. These kinds of discursive strategies generally fail because their origins are in different symbolic systems. This is to say that the meaning and structure of words bear different significations and implications across contexts. One JDP supporter asserted the following: “If the EU respects democracy it will accept people’s will...” but the conceptualization of the term “democracy” differs contextually (Al Jazeera, 2016). Wendy Brown’s critique (2010) can be repeated here, democracy constitutes nothing other than an empty signifier in the contemporary world. Hence, two distinct discourses have arisen in Turkey around the ambiguous meaning of the concept of “democracy.” While one of them accuses the JDP of anti-democratic policies, the JDP always justifies itself using the discourse of democratization. Words like “democracy” and “national will” are among the most popular in the hegemonic discourse. For example, the day of the attempted coup of the government, July 15, began to be celebrated as a national holiday, that of Democracy and National Unity Day. The employment of the term “democracy” by the JDP conforms to the general tendency of populist parties since populists pretend to behave as if they are the mere source of democracy and representation (Müller, 2016: 174). They try to exclude other parties from the political arena by dominating the media or weakening civil society. On the contrary, the opposition parties try to adopt a more liberal understanding of democracy.
The discourse of New Turkey has become much more persistent recently. At this point, New Turkey is a project aiming to shut the door on the old, poor conditions of Turkey and make it great again (Bora, 2018: 12). Moreover, the JDP introduced its July 15 (post-coup) victory as a Turkish independence war victory, illustrating it as an imaginary catastrophe characterizing the recreation of the old good days. Furthermore, the JDP celebrates the public resistance of July 15 as if it were an epic drama; it has been inscribed around many places throughout the country. They have also introduced many photo exhibitions and competitions relating to July 15 all over the country, especially in high schools.

To conclude, the discourse of New Turkey is bound up with nostalgia for Ottoman times as was exemplified using several points. However, it is not simply a backwards attitude but rather a focus on the re-creation of the old in a new form. There has even been a higher rate of production of TV series about Ottoman emperors and social life in Ottoman times. Also, there are many elements in Erdoğan’s discourse implying the new powerful condition of Turkey. Several examples can be given to this end such as Erdoğan’s speech about the dialogue between himself and foreign tourists in which the tourists appreciated Turkish health reforms by expressing their admiration for the development of Turkey (Akşam, 2015). This strategy has constructed a perception of a powerful state and it has increased sympathy towards the JDP regime. Furthermore, many other discursive elements anchored in the imaginary are accompanied by this primordial fantasy, and these elements appear with meaning sedimentations through the freezing of words.

Frozen Words and the Ethics of Psychoanalysis

Erdoğan posits that the country’s enemies want to take Turkey back into the old days when Turkey was poor (İnternethaber, 2015). His hegemonic discourse indicates that the country is surrounded by both internal and external enemies. The discourse provides imagination for the subject and in this way the effects sourced from the real which disorder the subject can be attributed to this external figure. In other words, the situation reminds us of the figure of the Jew who is responsible for all disasters. In relation to this notion Judis (2016, 21) points out the triadic structure of right-wing populism since right-wing populists condemn the elites for cooperating with a third element like immigrants. The position of the third element seems to be occupied primarily by the West in the Turkish case. Thus, the elites are generally accused of being pawns of Western powers.

Moreover, when a subject faces off with the Other, it gets rid of the vague desire for it. Imaginary point de capitons emerge for anchoring meaning in frozen imaginary spots. This
process creates a frozen subject in which the Lacanian category of desire no longer functions because the very desire itself refers to the displacement of the Master signifier. Desire is the function of the unconscious, which provides the appearance of the subject in the language with lapsus, slipping off the tongue, so it opens a place for subjectivity. Hence, the appearance of the subject can only be possible with the jump of the real into speech (Lacan, 1997: 321-322).

One of the main strategies of the ruling party is the creation of some sedimentations and the fantasy of besetment. When Erdoğan reads poems in front of people and experiences crying jags, these sedimentations actualize. For example, he started one of his speeches with these verses in Siirt:

“Minarets are bayonets
Domes are helmets
Mosques are barracks
Believers are soldiers” (Heper and Toktaş, 2003: 171)

Political discourses accompanied by poems create an atmosphere where meaning freezes. Socrates critiqued poets of Homer’s era because they fixed meaning in particular points which caused the prevention of grasping a block by block understanding of things (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967: 114). Many of the JDP’s commercials use the same strategy, and they involve many poetic elements. The commercial for the 2004 presidential elections contains many poetic elements, e.g. “Do not blame fate, there is a predestination even for fate. Whatever they do is vain, there is a decree that comes from heaven” (AKP, 2014). The verses repeat fantasies similar to the fantasy of besetment but also refer to a god-like power that will rescue Turkey.

Lacan locates his ethics outside of the service of the goods by situating it beyond the pleasure principle (O’Sullivan, 2010: 58). Lacanian desire is nothing other than the metonymy of the object and the coming into being and passing away of the subject. The primary similarity between Marxism and psychoanalysis rooted in the locus of desire is that they both favor praxis over frozen fantasy. Furthermore, while Lacan (1990: 3) states that “saying it all is literally impossible: words fail,” Badiou situates his ethics according to the Lacanian scheme. Herein, Badiou (2004: 67) states: “Evil is the desire for ‘Everything-to-be-said.’” An assertion about the omniscience of a paradigm ignores the irreducible experience of the real and totalitarian ideologies are rooted in that reduction. Words lose their syntagmatic positions in the sentences and gain independence. This is also the case in the contemporary political situation of Turkey which is connected to the fixation of the pervert that loses its subjectivity in the fantasy of the pre-traumatic condition. Hence, the subject cannot come
into being and pass away because the founding component of the fantasy is always filled by the master signifier (Lacan, 1997: 321-322). It is the pre-traumatic, desirable Ottoman conditions in the Turkish case.

Conclusion

The contemporary ruling party of Turkey has seen rising support, except for some fluctuations, since its founding. Apart from the RPP government which held power from the foundation of the Republic till the 1950s, the JDP has governed the country for the longest duration of any party in the history of Turkey. To understand the success of the JDP, it is a must to consider the function of its ideology and hegemonic discourse in relation to the symbolic structures and imaginary elements contained therein. The nodal points of the ideology can be discovered using psychoanalysis since it contributes to the illumination of the fantasy. The construction of identification with the leader is exclusively emphasized since psychoanalysis points out that some gestures, which appear as weaknesses, can actually contribute to building the identification process, in contrast to common sense. On the other hand, such an analysis can provide significant clues for counter-discourses because it helps to reveal the implications of several discursive patterns on the unconscious level.

All in all, the discourse of the ruling party can be analyzed in reference to three main elements from a psychoanalytic approach. First of all, a considerable proportion of the society enters into the identification process with Erdoğan and many of the weaknesses which Erdoğan exhibits do not diminish this support but can rather strengthen the identification. Secondly, the narrative employed by the ruling party sublimates the pre-traumatic condition, while focusing on both the external split between the West and Turkey and the internal split between the elite and the will of the people. Lastly, words and images come to have independent positions and create meaning sedimentations rooted in the rhetoric of the ruling party. These discursive strategies contribute to the maintenance of the ruling party’s hegemony. Hence, all these points and many others function together for maintaining political support for the JDP, and further investigations must be conducted to understand this complicated picture. For further research, the dominant discursive patterns of the opposition can be considered to examine problems that inhibit the construction of the counter-hegemony against the prevailing regime, and to discover possible alternative discourses that can mobilize various segments of the society.
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Book review


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The demand for recognition of the individual’s identity is a key concept that consolidates many of the political discontents in the state of the world today. This is the premise of Identity, the latest work by Francis Fukuyama, who almost three decades ago contended with his ‘End of History’ thesis that the triumph of liberal democracy globally would be the endgame. Yet a lot has changed since then, and the book addresses this head on in its first pages, with Fukuyama taking on the critiques against his controversial theory and framing his latest work as an addendum. Generally aimed at a popular audience, the book’s simple style gets the message across but lacks depth in providing substantial solutions to the issues at hand.

Identity acknowledges the difficulties of developing a fair and modern state in an era where the inevitable erosion of liberal democracy is not a far-fetched notion, and that the chief cause for this is the failure of such a system to fully solve the problem of people’s inherent craving for the recognition of their selfhood. Because of this, identity quickly manifests into identity politics in which this aspiration for recognition evolves into a desire to be respected on an equal footing with other members of society (p. 10). This in turn has the detrimental potential of advancing into a demand for recognition of one’s superiority over others, which is embodied, for instance, by ethnonationalist and religious fundamentalist forces dominating political discourse in societies and fueling a politics of resentment (p. 22). Fukuyama emphasizes these aspirations and demands as inherent in human nature, something that he borrows from Greek philosophers such as Plato.
The book further contends that the current understanding of identity had emerged as societies began to modernize, citing the Age of Enlightenment as well as a few historical Eurocentric events as the starting point of modernization. This effectively affirms the book’s weakness, namely its emphasis on the developments in the Global North, as if identity politics and populist authoritarianism are exclusive to that part of the world. Fukuyama draws on this limited history to make an appeal that unless societies forge a ‘universal’ understanding of human dignity based on liberal democratic values, enduring conflict is to be expected. It is a legitimate warning to make but with an equivocal output considering that it is based on a moralizing and sanitized narrative of Western accounts of the past. This consequently reproduces a rose-colored image of Enlightenment values as being impeccable, even though they were also used as a justification for colonial and capitalist expansions that continue to affect North-South relations today (Dhawan 2017).

As critical theorists and postcolonial scholars have noted, despite the commitment to values of equality, freedom and human dignity, the proponents and defenders of the Enlightenment concurrently flirted with anti-democratic forces and condoned tyrannical projects that have devastated large parts of the globe (Ibid., Mishra 2016). This whitewashed legacy is apparent in the pages of the book. And this blatant omission of perspectives from the Global South insinuates a position that effectively ignores genuine struggles of those at the margins – of those who have historically been forgotten, silenced and repressed. Indeed, Identity’s failure to emphasize liberalism’s historical complicity in institutionalizing discriminatory hierarchies that privileged propertied white men as well as imperialist enterprises is a huge gap in the book. This is a missed opportunity to offer an alternative insight into how marginalized peoples and their identities were initially subjugated by domineering groups.

The latter point is worth noting because Fukuyama compares the identity-driven populism of both the Left and Right in their narrative of identity as being fixated on the same understanding and regards them as equally worth discrediting (pp. 158-159), when in fact huge differences exist. This impulse to shift the blame to both sides of the political spectrum while hiding behind a facade of centrist individualism effectively disparages and diminishes the value of the demands of those at the margins. Identity misinterprets the Left’s strategy by failing to adequately consider the empowering potential of how the subjugation of certain marginal sectors of society has finally led to the instrumentalization of their selfhood to rebel and seek progressive transformative policies that reflect on the multiplex nature of such identities (pp. 117-118). Moreover, Fukuyama discounts the broad-based
solidarities of other marginalized groups that highlight the intersectionality of their struggles and demands for dignity, describing their appeals as a “cheap substitute for serious thinking” about how to solve ongoing crises (pp. 114-116), yet he himself fails to offer something consequential. The book is therefore amiss in its assessment that the demands for recognition should be viewed as polarizing or hostile to democracy, when instead they could be seen as something empowering that may result in its enhancement.

A rather inauspicious feature in Fukuyama’s thesis are the proposed solutions, which are mere symptomatic treatments and do not address the structural roots of the problem. A case-in-point is his tendency to hold on to the Westphalian concept of the nation-state. The endorsement of a refined nationalism is questionable as he makes the case further that this needs to be sustained and enhanced as to ensure that national identity be based on normative values embedded in contemporary liberalism (pp. 138-139). Some measures he proposes to make this a reality is citizenship law reform based on birthright (p. 167), education reform and the implementation of conscription or a compulsory national service, with the latter being invoked as an incentive for the young generation to engage in nation-building (p. 174). But this is a dangerously contentious – if not anachronistic – policy in a lot of countries, especially in developing ones with fractured societies struggling against governments and militaries that have a history of oppressing dissent and minorities.

When it comes to immigration and citizenship, the idea of a more inclusive and uniform law on naturalization (something that would apply to the European Union) and the endorsement of the *jus soli* principle come across as relatively progressive, but the remedies are cut short and do not go beyond the policy level (pp. 163-183). Though he talks about the strengthening of the welfare state to mitigate economic inequality (pp. 128-131), a clear analysis on how is not provided; not to mention the fact that there is a disdain in considering a class perspective and a lack of highlighting structural aspects of heightening social disparities. It is therefore not surprising that the book does not see any contradictions in endorsing the idea of upholding liberal democratic values with an amplified version of national identity at its core – a version that focuses on the shared acceptance of the country’s political system (p. 126). The premise thus falls short as it does not thoroughly scrutinize the neoliberal framework that has enabled the rise of regressive nativist forces that install the likes of Bolsonaro, Duterte, Erdoğan, Kurz, Modi, Trump and other illiberal leaders and demagogues into power.

Fukuyama’s latest work is purposed to provide a primer on contemporary political developments that include the rise of populism in which the politics of identity plays a huge
role, yet the output is simply a recognition of liberal democracy’s flaws and fragility and the forces bringing it down. A criticism of the system itself is absent, and thus it effectively becomes an unconvincing defense of liberal democratic principles. The problems of identity politics are laid out but the proposed remedies for them seem fail to address the socioeconomic imbalances that continue to fuel societal grievances and generate conflict.

Nevertheless, Fukuyama is right in saying that the notion of identity is neither fixed nor given to us at birth (pp. 182-183), and that it is in fact manifold, but it is ill-informed to simply dismiss those who seek to emphasize their lived experiences and insist on the acknowledgment of their inherent worth. Indeed, the demands of identity are part of a climactic shift that define modern world affairs. And viewing the pursuit of identity politics as an emancipatory tool to revolt against existing injustices and rising inequalities is to perceive its capability to improve democracy by radically fighting for more inclusion and political participation that dare to go beyond the boundaries of the liberal order.

References

