
Devrim Adam Yavuz, *Democracy and Capitalism in Turkey. The State, Power, and Big Business*, I.B. Tauris, London-New York, 2024.

Is there a relationship between capitalism and democracy? What might prompt a group of Turkish business elites to embrace democratizing principles rather than remain conservative and state-bound?

The new volume written by Devrim Adam Yavuz, *Democracy and Capitalism in Turkey. The State Power, and Big Business* (I.B. Tauris 2023), seeks to answer these questions. By approaching this interesting topic through the lens of political sociology, the monograph opens up fascinating new perspectives regarding the history of Turkish elites and the nature of Turkish democracy itself. Although this is a topic that has already been studied with reference to the cases of Western Europe and the Arab-speaking states, in the contemporary Turkish context the author applies a sociological method of enquiry to the case of TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association), offering an interesting reflection on a not well-known topic. Moving from the historical and highly influential works of Karl Marx and Max Weber on the relationship between democracy and capitalism, the author decides to adopt Michael Mann's distinctions on the various styles of social power, which identify the State and the social actors' desire to rely on ideological-economic-military-political powers to better exert their influence in various areas, promoting the development of modern states and cap-

italism. In an attempt to demonstrate this process of welding between State and business in the specificity of the Turkish case, Yavuz starts from the late Ottoman reforms, using the work of Şerif Mardin, and continues reaching all the way up to the TÜSİAD's Democratization Report, tracing the stages of the development of the Turkish entrepreneurial class in the twentieth century, and highlighting its uniqueness and usefulness in piecing together the complex puzzle that underlies the relationship between capitalism and democracy.

In the first chapter, Yavuz points out the nature of what he defined as TÜSİAD's ideological turn in the Turkish political environment. This section is not simply a better description of TÜSİAD's business activities, as the author highlights the limits of Turkish democracy, providing the reader with factual information and fundamental conceptual tools. In the second chapter, he offers the reader a comparative historical perspective and a general overview of the existing theories regarding the complex relation between democracy and capitalism. Particularly, in this section, Yavuz underscores the ambiguity of the theories regarding this topic, outlining how, if in Western Europe capitalism is generally used to explain the rise of democratic governments, in the case of authoritarian regimes scholars often point out the antagonism between capitalism and democracy.

The third chapter offers a background for those readers unfamiliar with the context of Turkish late-industrialization. It is in this chapter that Yavuz highlights how State-business relations evolved between the reforms of the late Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II and the Young Turks, while European Great Powers like Germany, Great Britain and France were far ahead in terms of their industrialization levels. Within the same chapter, the author describes the nation-building phase during the interwar period, where new Turkish elites followed a global trend, developing strategies to implement the relations between political-business sectors and society. Finally, in the last part Yavuz describes State-led industrialization from the Second World War until the 1990s, when the Turkish State actively participated in economic development projects. In this general context, the historian argues that Turkish political elites used informal channels of incorporation to build the government's ideological power and a national bourgeoisie interested in preserving ties between business and State. The fourth chapter is focused on the 1970s as a period of transition, when Turkish business elites realised that the government did not represent them enough and their interests began to diverge from those of the rest of the private sector. It is in this chapter that the use of interviews with members of TÜSİAD allows the author to demonstrate a fundamental turning point, when political and social changes persuaded the group

that their aspirations should not be purely based on the increase of political power of large capitalists, explaining the origins of new initiatives.

In the fifth chapter, the author analyses how the material needs of the Turkish industry were modified in the period between the coup of the 1980s and the early 2000s. Through interviews with members of TÜSİAD, Yavuz demonstrates in which way, in this period, Turkish business elites aimed to be integrated into world markets, becoming more capital intensive. The sixth chapter gives a more complete image of TÜSİAD and the turn of Turkish business elites toward democracy. This turning point was due to the transformation of the relationship between State and business elites, where the latter chose democratisation as an answer to a government no longer interested in incorporating class interests.

The seventh chapter analyses the further transformation of this relationship in the period between 2002 and 2021, during the AKP government. In this way, it explores the factors that shaped TÜSİAD and the rest of Turkish business elites from a prodemocratic perspective. In contradiction with the specialist literature which would have predicted the increase of conservatism within TÜSİAD, the chapter demonstrates the consolidation of a prodemocratic perspective in an international phase of consolidation of authoritarian regimes. In the final chapter, the author offers comparativist tools to reconsider the relationship between democracy and capitalism, opening the possibility of further discussion on the position of business elites in democratisation processes. Therefore, it evidently emerges how “the democratizing role capitalists adopted is not, in some cases, merely a narrow, instrumentalist position that can easily change”.

Devrim Adam Yavuz’s book applies an innovative political-sociological methodology using new primary sources of great interest for scholars of political sciences, sociology and contemporary Turkish history. Taking up the existing literature on the relationship between democracy and capitalism, he points out its limitations, highlighting how the Turkish case is once again illuminating from the standpoint of social sciences and humanities in general, twisting well-consolidated knowledge often given as established. As noted by John A. Hall, “the book certainly deserves the widest readership”.

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